

## reasons to be strong

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](http://archiveofourown.org/works/34125283) at <http://archiveofourown.org/works/34125283>.

|                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| Rating:          | <a href="#">Teen And Up Audiences</a>  |
| Archive Warning: | <a href="#">Graphic Depictions Of Violence</a>   |
| Category:        | <a href="#">Gen</a>  |
| Fandom:          | <a href="#">Dream SMP</a>  |
| Relationships:   | <a href="#">Grayson   Purpled &amp; Ranboo &amp; Toby Smith   Tubbo &amp; TommyInnit</a> , <a href="#">Grayson   Purpled &amp; TommyInnit (Video Blogging RPF)</a> , <a href="#">Ranboo &amp; TommyInnit &amp; Toby Smith   Tubbo</a> , <a href="#">Grayson   Purpled &amp; Luke   Punz</a>  |
| Characters:      | <a href="#">Grayson   Purpled (Video Blogging RPF)</a> , <a href="#">Luke   Punz</a> , <a href="#">Wilbur Soot</a> , <a href="#">TommyInnit (Video Blogging RPF)</a> , <a href="#">Toby Smith   Tubbo</a> , <a href="#">Ranboo (Video Blogging RPF)</a> , <a href="#">Eret (Video Blogging RPF)</a> , <a href="#">Phil Watson (Video Blogging RPF)</a> , <a href="#">Tyler   Wallibear</a> , <a href="#">Hannah   Hannahxxrose</a> , <a href="#">Dylan   BoomerNA (Video Blogging RPF)</a> , <a href="#">and more! - Character</a> , <a href="#">Alexis   Quackity</a> , <a href="#">Fundy (Video Blogging RPF)</a> , <a href="#">Karl Jacobs</a>  |
| Additional Tags: | <a href="#">BAMF Grayson   Purpled</a> , <a href="#">Alternate Universe - Superheroes/Superpowers</a> , <a href="#">no beta we die like l'manberg</a> , <a href="#">Vigilante Grayson   Purpled</a> , <a href="#">Mercenary Grayson   Purpled</a> , <a href="#">TommyInnit is So Done (Video Blogging RPF)</a> , <a href="#">Morally Ambiguous Character</a> , <a href="#">Angst</a> , <a href="#">Canon-Typical Violence</a> , <a href="#">Implied/Referenced Child Abuse</a> , <a href="#">Child Soldiers</a> , <a href="#">Kinda</a> , <a href="#">he's not really a soldier</a> , <a href="#">Childhood Trauma</a> , <a href="#">Guns</a> , <a href="#">Superpowers</a> , <a href="#">Mercenary Luke   Punz</a> , <a href="#">TommyInnit is a good friend</a> , <a href="#">Bench trio</a> , <a href="#">Grayson   Purpled is Not Good At Feelings</a> , <a href="#">Is Anyone Here Tho?</a> , <a href="#">How Do I Tag</a> , <a href="#">I Wrote This Instead of Sleeping</a> , <a href="#">there's metaphors and stuff about "breaking the cycle"</a> , <a href="#">These Morals Are... There?</a> , <a href="#">Grayson   Purpled Needs a Hug</a> , <a href="#">He gets one too</a> , <a href="#">Found Family</a> , <a href="#">Grayson   Purpled-centric (Video Blogging RPF)</a> , <a href="#">Punz kinda sucks</a> , <a href="#">BUT THE REST OF THEM DON'T</a> |
| Language:        | English  |
| Series:          | Part 3 of <a href="#">Acts of Spite</a>  |
| Collections:     | <a href="#">Wani's sbi hyperfixation of (mostly) super hero fics</a> , <a href="#">So many books so little time!!</a>  |
| Stats:           | Published: 2021-09-27 Completed: 2022-09-12 Words: 36,951 Chapters: 3/3  |

# reasons to be strong

by [ellis \(ellabellachicketychella\)](#).

## Summary

Purpled has to deal with his mildly traumatic past, along the way he figures out... that people care more than they let on, he has something to care for and that he does have a home. And that people will stay.

---

*“How would you like to see the worst moments in your life again?”*

*“You can’t control what I’d see,” Purpled managed, voice shaking slightly. “You can’t. You know that, I know that. You’re just relying on my past to be that bad, that the bad outweighs the good.”*

*The man shrugged. “I don’t reckon you’re going to have a good time.”*

---

aka, a tinaaos!purpled character study. taking place from the grand ol' age of five to the age of seventeen

# safety

## Chapter Summary

safety.

the first reason purpled learnt to stay strong.

## Chapter Notes

Hello! This idea has had me in a fucking chokehold for... a while, so I wrote it! I hope you enjoy, tinaaos!purpled is one of my favourite characters to write. be warned, i don't know wallibear's or boomer's boundaries, but this isn't about them as such, i just needed some characters and they seemed to fit the best. If any of them are uncomfortable, I will edit this fucker so they're not here. I don't want to violate any boundaries at all!

### **Warnings:**

child abuse, violence, guns, implied character death (not really a main character), disassociation, non-consensual drug use  
(please let me know if i've missed any!)

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Purpled sat there, back straight, hands tied to the sides of the chair. This was fine. He'd dealt with worse for less of a benefit anyway. A fist swung and pain erupted through his nose. He looked at the person who swung.

Nothing. They couldn't even break his nose right.

“At least break it right.” Purpled rolled his eyes, clenching and unclenching his hands. Another punch which did nothing. Purpled sighed.

Then proceeded to break his own nose on the table, he looked up.

“Are you done yet? Yes. I’m intimidated. Now what do you want?”

A man in a suit sat down across from him, a file in his hand, he smiled. Something sick and twisted and for the first time, Purpled felt the prickling beginnings of fear rise up in his throat. Okay then.

“Purpled,” the man said, which wasn’t a shock, considering that was his name. He opened a file. “Mercenary, vigilante... there’s no information about you since before you debuted as a mercenary. We believe you were trained before that, by a civilian— that you are nothing special apart from powers that aid you.”

Purpled gulped. Oh shit. Okay then. They actually did research that was... terrifying in itself.

The man in front of him adjusted his papers. “So, Purpled... you’re going to tell us your deal, or we’re going to...” he smiled and Purpled actually shuddered. “Well, you can infer that.”

“My deal?” Purpled repeated, voice completely flat. “My deal is I’m a vigilante and if someone pays me enough, and morally I’m fine with it. I’ll break some bones. That’s it,” he blinked at the man. “I’m not that complicated.”

The man raised an eyebrow, looking back down at the table. “Punz.”

Purpled didn’t react, not outwardly at least.

“Hannah.”

He kept his face straight, he wasn’t doing this. Not today.

“Boomer.”

With great difficulty, he ignored the obvious jokes there. Instead he clenched his fists slightly. Before taking a deep breath.

“Walli.”

Purpled gave the man a look. “Are you done?”

“Where are those four?”

“Punz is still in L'Manberg... similar gig to me. Hannah, Boomer and Walli left the country, last I heard they were on the other side of the world, enjoying their lives.”

The man raised an eyebrow, leaning a bit closer.

Purpled's nose hurt. The effects of slamming his head into the table (shockingly enough), and he ignored that pain to instead look the man in the eyes. Humanise himself. Make himself look as young as possible, as human as possible.

“I don't believe you.”

“I don't care enough to lie to you.”

“You don't care about the people who were raised with you?” The man challenged.

Purpled sighed, rolling his eyes and shuffling back in his chair. More than comfortable to live here forever. “You weren't really raised together, they were your competition,” Purpled drawls, “Those three were always closer.”

“Why’s that?”

“I…” Purpled looked down at his hands, he couldn’t quite break out of this rope. These guys knew what they were doing. At least to some degree. “I was sent out more, I trained longer, I was better.”

“I still don’t believe you.”

“I don’t know where they are.” Purpled deadpanned, trying to ignore the panic clawing up his throat. “I don’t care, I really have places to be—”

“I don’t believe you.” The man reached under the table, and there was the clink of vials.

Purpled gulped, not fighting against the restraints yet. Just sitting there, getting ready to strike — maybe he could break the chair? Snap it right in half, that would work very well. Risky however.

He glanced at the vials.

“Hallucinogens.” The man said and Purpled somehow didn’t start screaming. “How would you like to see the worst moments in your life again?”

“You can’t control what I’d see,” Purpled managed, voice shaking slightly, too much. His voice was shaking too much. He wasn’t supposed to be scared. “You can’t. You know that, I know that. You’re just relying on my past to be that bad, that the bad outweighs the good.”

The man shrugged. “I don’t reckon you’re going to have a good time.” He picked up one of the vials. It was probably some variant on blue, most things were these days, manipulated and moulded to whatever the user needed.

Purpled took a deep breath, fingers digging into the arms of the chair. Almost uncomfortably so as Purpled gave a soft sigh, hoping that this wouldn't be too bad, knowing his luck it would be fucking dreadful.

“We can do this easily.” The man said, a false bright smile on his face and Purpled hated that more than anything else. “Or not.”

“Not.”

“Okay.” The man stood up, the chair squeaking against the floor in a way that had Purpled cringing.

He grabbed the vial, before grabbing Purpled around the face, he squeezed too, he didn't even pretend to be gentle. Purpled threw his weight back, the chair tipping and he crashed against the floor.

Kicking his legs the chair snapped underneath him, and Purpled managed to jump back up onto his feet, he stared at the man for a moment. Who was staring at him, neither of them moved for a long moment.

Purpled threw himself backwards, the rope around his hands still there, but not attached to anything. Good, he had all his limbs and several things to throw.

The man blinked. Before covering his mouth and throwing.

Glass smashed against the ground, and there was sizzling.

Green dust and smoke exploded and out of panic Purpled took a deep breath and realised at the moment exactly as he did it.

*Shit.*

The world spun, and Purpled raised his hand. Hoping that would do anything, everything spun. His vision went blurry as he stumbled against the table, holding himself up with the side of the table.

Oh. This was not great.

*Stay awake.*

His eyes were very tired, he closed them for a moment before jerking awake again. He put his fists up.

*You need to attack, dumbass.*

Yeah. He did. Need to do that, that was something he needed to do, quite badly. If he was being completely frank.

Or... he'd have a nap.

Vaguely he registered the feeling of him hitting the floor, and that he needed to get up and not let whatever the fuck this was going to be happen. But... his eyes were tired, he needed a nap.

---

*A thought, that's not quite his. But no one else's either.*

*He needs to get to his friends. They'll do... something. Anything. Anything is better than this.*

---

“Back straight.”

Purpled did that, straightening his posture, hands folded on the table. He watched the people walk about. Scan for weapons. They taught him that, scan for weapons. What can he use if things go South?

There aren't a lot of things around. The steak knife is the obvious one, but they'd reach for that too. The plates can be smashed, and quite easily, they'll do damage across someone's head. Forks are good, they can be thrown with a lot of force. There's a vase, there's so many things that he could throw and use as weapons.

Even the drink bottle on the table could be used as a weapon, the pen. What else?

There was a hand on his shoulder, and while Purpled didn't jump. He was startled. He didn't flinch, instead his shoulders hunched slightly, and he tried to calm that reaction down before anyone noticed.

The person across the table had a gun. Purpled had heard it click. He looked up, the hand on his shoulder tightened, nails digging painfully and he repressed the noise that bubbled at the back of his throat. He took a deep breath, willing himself to stay calm.

“I see,” the person across from them drawled, like this was a game. “You have acquired another... trainee.”

“I have.”

“And is he promising?”

The nails tightened. “Yes, he is.”

Purpled willed himself to stay calm, ignoring the terror that bit up the back of his throat. He was trained better than that. The grip tightens even more, and Purpled bites back the urge to scream, he bites back the urge to start crying.

“More or less than Punz.”

“More.”

“Excellent.”

---

*“Purpled? Why the fuck are you on the floor? Holy shit, Tubbo, is he high?”*

*“Fuck off,” comes another voice, a bit posher. “It obviously wasn’t a planned thing. It’s all over his clothes. What the fuck?”*

*“Oh.” Another voice, different to the other two. “I know what that is. Quick, get him inside.”*

---

It’s just him and Punz at the start. Before Hannah, Boomer and Walli. It was just the two of them, Punz who’s similar to him, but so different in a way that he can never describe. Punz was here first, and would be there last.

That’s it. Punz and Purpled, Purpled laying down on the wooden floors, looking up at the roof, or at the dummies against the wall. With knives in them, as Purpled’s trying to hone his powers. It was a peaceful existence.

“Hey Punz,” Purpled asked, not bothering to roll over and face him. “What do I do once I’ve finished my training?”

“Purpled. You’re five.” Punz laughed, shaking his head, it sounded fond though. “You won’t be done for a while.”

“I’m five?” Purpled asked, “Since when.”

“Since... yesterday?” Punz sat up slowly, “Purps, it was your birthday yesterday.”

“What?”

“We had cake?” Punz laughed, shaking his head again, “We didn’t train yesterday.”

“Oh.” Purpled said, blinking a few times before shrugging. He laid back down, looking up at the roof. “I’m five.”

“Allegedly. You speak like you’re a mid-aged professor.”

“A what?”

“Nevermind.”

And that was how the early days were, Purpled would train a bit. Spar with Punz, nothing was deadly, he wasn’t fighting for his life. It was just... nice, it was so nice to not have to worry about much.

Despite what everyone said, it wasn't that bad. It was never that bad, everyone else was dramatic. He got stronger, faster, he grew. And that was all there was to it, it was never as bad as the others made it out to be.

The early years were the best though, it was him and Punz. Training. That's all there was, there were no threats of sparring until you passed out, they weren't sent out on missions. It was nice...

Not nice. Well. It was complicated.

---

*"Okay." A voice says, "He's been drugged by someone. Reliving bits of his past."*

*"What do we do?" Another frantic voice, huh. These voices are concerned, they care about him. That's... odd. "What can we do?"*

*"Wait."*

---

Pain erupted on the back of his hand, and Purpled drew his hand back from the paper. She looked at him, a scowl on her lips. "Wrong hand."

"Ma'am—" Punz started.

"Quiet." She snapped, "Hold out your hand Purpled."

Purpled held out his left hand, turned so the palm was facing the roof. He looked at her, before pain erupted through his hand. Then again. The ruler hit his hand multiple times, and

he watched with a sick fascination as blood pooled from his hand.

Huh. That was new.

He stared at the blood, which dripped onto the wooden floors. She smirked, “Don’t write with that hand.”

“Yes Ma’am.” Purpled swapped the pen to his other hand, closing his left hand in a way to try and stop the blood from pouring all across his paper. With an unsteady hand he started writing, his hand shaking so much it felt illegal.

She tapped the ruler on the desk, and Purpled jumped backwards. Punz watched, he did nothing, but had concerned eyes. “You write with your right hand. And you write neat, okay? Just like the writing in that book.”

“Ma’am—”

“Quiet,” she snapped, hitting the ruler on Punz’s desk. “Do your sums.” Punz nodded and hunched over, so he was looking at his own equations.

His hand shook as he tried to draw the shapes perfectly. There was the threat of the ruler tapping against the table as Purpled drew the letters the best he could, they were wobbly and his hand was shaking.

He put the pen down, before looking up.

“Again.” She hit the ruler on the table and Purpled jumped. “Do not flinch. Never flinch, it lets your opponent know you are scared.”

“Ma’am, you’re not my opponent.”

“Everyone is your opponent, Purpled,” she said. Purpled glanced over at Punz, and she tapped his worksheet again. Purpled looked back at the paper. “Everyone. Punz. Me. Everyone. Feel no emotion, show no emotion.”

“Oh.” Purpled tilted his head towards the paper, so that his hair fell in front of his face.

“Repeat after me,” she snapped. “Feel no emotion.”

“Feel no emotion.”

“Show no emotion.”

“Show no emotion.” Purpled repeated, taking a deep breath and picking up the pen again.

“Keep going,” she snapped eventually, with a rap on the table and Purpled managed to suppress his jump and just looked up at her. “Get these letters perfect.”

Purpled nodded, despite the way Punz looked concerned out of the corner of his eye. And Purpled got the letters right, as the sun started streaming through the window, and exhaustion weighing on his bones.

He got a rubik’s cube for that, and his hair ruffled.

It was nice.

Even if his hand was scarred. It was nice.

---

*“Is it getting better?”*

*“It’ll get worse... so much worse. Make sure he can’t hit any of us, he might start flailing. Think of it like a nightmare.”*

*“But it’s real.”*

*A sad sigh. “Yeah.”*

---

There was someone here, Purpled wasn’t contracted as such. Someone came looking for them, and that was why Purpled had a knife, ready to throw as she walked back and forth in front of the table.

He was shaking slightly, he didn’t want to kill anyone. The man was tied to the chair, blood caking his face. Punz standing next to the chair, his knuckles had split open slightly and blood on his shirt.

“How did you find us?” She snapped.

“I don’t know—” the man said. He looked... twenty or so? And very confused. “Please, I was just running from the police. I don’t mean any trouble. Let me go,” he shuffled in the chair, like Punz didn’t know how to tie a knot. That man was not getting out any time soon. “I won’t tell anyone...” his eyes stopped on Purpled, from the frantic looks around the room. “That’s a child.”

Purpled couldn’t break eye contact with the man, no matter how much he wanted to. His eyes weren’t special at all. But they seemed locked on him and they were so... bright. Purpled

could almost feel the future in those eyes. And Purpled was hit with feeling, he took a step back.

What?

Those could not be his feelings. He was not that scared, he wasn't hopeful at all. He stared for a long moment, blinking a few more times, trying to figure out what this all meant. The man didn't break eye contact.

"Hi," the man said, tone soft and... caring? "How old are you?"

"Don't." Purpled said, taking a step back, he tightened his grip on the knife.

"I think I have a son your age," he said, "Are you about five?"

Purpled nodded. *She* walked so she was standing next to Purpled, grip tightening on his shoulder. Nails digging in painfully as Purpled winced. He swore blood was being drawn... he felt it.

He took a deep breath, steadying his breathing. Everyone was an opponent, he wasn't going to let this man get into his head. Her grip tightened and Purpled let out a small noise, jerking his shoulder away.

She glared, and Purpled flinched slightly. She looked disappointed and Purpled hated himself for it.

Purpled looked at the man again. Shoulders set and his expression blank, blank and... tired. He was so tired. He looked at the man, could he get Purpled out of here? Please... he wanted out of here.

He was tired. He was so, so, so tired.

She tapped her foot, and Purpled snapped himself from out of the daze. “Purpled. Break his wrist.”

Purpled looked at her for a moment longer than he had to. “Pardon?” He asked, taking a few steps away so that she had to move if she wanted to strike him. Purpled was not planning on being hit.

He stepped towards the man.

The man looked at him, with enough sympathy in his eyes that it seemed to be just... overwhelming, it was too much and not enough. Purpled hated it. He hated that this man was kind.

Everyone was opponents, but was someone really an opponent if they refused to play?

Purpled grabbed the man’s hand, nothing gentle about it.

“Break it.” She snapped.

Purpled twisted.

The man screamed.

Bones cracked making a sickening noise through the warehouse. Purpled barely blinked at the mangled mess of a hand, tears rolling down his face. Eyes wide, but not shocked as such just... scared. So, so scared.

“Now Purpled,” she said, “Use that knife—”

There was the noise of a knife being thrown and Punz stood there, hand out, like he threw a knife. The man slumped next to him, and Purpled ducked his head straight away. He knew that would've landed wherever he intended.

Purpled had the sinking feeling that the man was dead. Kind eyes, would never be kind again.

The woman grabbed him, yanking him backwards, pulling on his hair. That stopped hurting him a long time ago, but was uncomfortable so he obliged. He closed his eyes, he was not looking at this body— Punz had told him to never, ever, ever, look at a body.

The unspoken was to never do anything to make a body. Never kill anyone.

“Look.” She hissed, grip tightening, sharp nails digging into the side of his neck. “Look at the fucking injury. Open your eyes.”

“Ma’am—” Punz said, tone polite, but eyes fighting for all they were worth. Which was somehow everything and nothing. “He’s five ma’am.”

"Open. Your. Eyes. Purpled."

Purpled refused. He wasn't opening his eyes, nothing could make him open his eyes. He knew the body was there.

He knew that Punz had killed him. He'd seen enough TV shows to know what a dead person would look like. Pale. Bloody.

He shook his head.

There was a thump and he hit the floor, pain erupting through his shoulder but he kept his eyes screwed shut.

Footsteps.

Right next to his head.

"Deal with that body." She said and a door slammed.

Punz scrambled, so he was sitting next to Purpled. Purpled still didn't open his eyes and wouldn't until Punz said he could.

A gentle hand on his shoulder. "You can look, you're facing the wall. You won't see anything, I promise."

He did so. Grimacing at the light, and eyes adjusting. He looked at the brick wall, no windows. They were underground.

Punz took a shaky breath next to him, "Promise me Purpled. You will never kill anyone on purpose. You will never take a life unless you are threatened first."

Purpled opened his mouth, before closing it.

"Promise me, Purpled." Punz's voice broke. "You don't want that on your conscience."

"I promise."

And Purpled kept that promise.

---

*"Hey Purps." A soft voice, gentle and familiar. "I dunno when you can hear us and when you can't— but we care about you. I'm glad I met you."*

---

He was nine and on a mission. Standing next to a boy he doesn't know and feeling the gun in his backpack.

It's an intelligence mission. Something about a superhero that Purpled tuned out for, old information or something.

What *he* has to do is get in there. Download the files and leave. It's simple enough, he's done it before. He'll do it again.

He had a gun for the worst-case scenario. A knife in his boot, and a Spongebob backpack for apparently no reason.

It was almost funny.

He was wearing mismatched clothes. Red jeans, a green and orange shirt and a purple hoodie. Red and purple were interesting.

Also a teddy bear, that was shoved his direction. They tried to make him look as innocent as possible and succeeded.

He glanced at himself in the window of a store. He looked... young, like there was no hidden agenda behind there. The edges that have come from the training. He sighed again and hugged the bear a bit harder.

It was too bad he couldn't keep the bear. It was cute. He held it underneath his arm, really enjoying wearing a backpack.

What? Backpacks were cool.

He glanced up and the boy next to him seemed to talk. Just... at him. "And the servers are cool, because they reroute you to another server, which is in a different coding language. So you essentially need to hack two servers in java and python. Which is so cool. Basically—"

"I don't care." Purpled said, glaring at the boy. He has brown hair, he looked around Purpled's age and was tinkering with something in his hand.

The boy glared back.

Purpled's hand twitched towards his knife for a reason he didn't really understand. This boy wasn't a threat.

There was something under those eyes though, slightly deadly and dangerous. Hidden by something soft on the surface. That was a long way of expressing that this guy made Purpled... uneasy.

He gripped onto the handle of his backpack, and the boy looked ahead.

"So." The boy said. "How good are you at espionage?"

"Pardon?"

"Well, you look like someone who knows how to be a spy."

"What does that mean?"

The boy just gave him a look.

"Wait, what—"

"Bye!"

The boy scampered off, and Purpled would swear until the day he died that he was carrying a knife.

He turned around and gave Purpled a toothy smile. It appeared that there were plenty of child mercenaries, spies and assassins in L'Manberg. Purpled didn't say anything else, and instead grabbed his backpack a little more.

Then stepped into the office. The key was to pretend that he was supposed to be here. He squared his shoulders and looked at the receptionist. Stealing, what could go wrong?

First step. The receptionist.

Purpled just slumped a little, and managed to pass under her eye line. Although that was easy, considering she was on her phone and chewing gum obnoxiously. Purpled ducked again, stepping into the elevator.

There. That went okay. He took a deep breath and pressed the button to the top floor. The key was to pretend he knew what was happening.

He grabbed his backpack a little tighter and took a deep breath.

The elevator door chimed open with a gentle tone.

And what he saw was... a lot. Two people slumped and bleeding. Blood staining the carpet and walls.

A kid. The one from earlier.

Holding a bloody knife in one hand, covered in blood and scratches. With a mini microchip in one of his hands.

He made eye contact.

Slightly awkward, the boy currently had a gun pointed at his head. Resting against his temple as he was hyperventilating.

Okay. Purpled could do this.

He needed that chip. The best way to do that, was to get the boy free and fight him without the other variables.

Purpled had a knife and a gun in his hand before he could really think about it. And he pointed it at the head of the man who was holding the boy.

Okay. Purpled knew what to do. In theory.

He paused for a long moment, hands shaking ever-so slightly and he took a deep breath. With a sigh, he pointed the gun at the man's shoulder.

Then fired.

The gun recoiled much more than Purpled thought it would, and he stumbled back a little. Red bloomed from the man's shoulder, and the boy broke himself free. Digging a knife into the man's thigh and twisting.

The boy stumbled forwards, towards a window.

Purpled jumped, catching him around the waist and they tumbled to the ground. Landing on top of him, and scrambling to grab a knife or something, and to stop himself from getting hit in the face.

The boy screamed and started thrashing.

"Give me the chip!" Purpled yelled, as a flailing hand managed to hit him in the face. Pain shot through his nose. "Give me the chip!" Purpled yelled again and the boy continued to scream as loud as he could.

Purpled hit him across the face. He screamed louder. Purpled reached to his shoe and pulled out a knife. Holding it to the boy's face, he stopped his screeching straight away. There was almost a calm sort of expression in the boy's eyes.

"Are you going to kill me?" He asked.

"No," Purpled said, he was holding the knife surprisingly steady all things considered. "Give me the chip."

“I can’t do that,” the boy snapped, one of his hands was closed tightly bound into a fist. That was the thing he needed then. “I need this more than you.”

“Fucking bullshit.” Purpled snapped. Before moving so his foot was on the boy’s wrist. Letting them both know that he could break it without much more effort than moving slightly. The boy’s eyes went wide for a moment, but he seemed to force that fear down. It was almost impressive. “Now. Give me that chip, and you can keep your wrist in one piece. Does that seem fair?”

“Not really,” the boy said. “Look, my life kinda depends on this chip.”

“That’s funny,” Purpled said, “Mine does too.” Purpled pressed his foot down more and the boy made a noise that seemed to come from the back of his throat. Purpled pushed a bit more and something creaked.

The boy stayed silent. And Purpled could sense the hate in his eyes.

“I’m sorry about this,” the boy said.

He was being thrown back, and vaguely registered glass shattering against his back. He reached out and managed to grab the side of the wall.

Something popped and pain shot through his shoulder as he jerked to a stop. Okay. This was fine.

Then he realised, oh shit, he was dangling from the side of a building, with cuts and scratches on his hands. He looked down for a moment, it was a huge drop. A huge drop that he couldn’t survive no matter how well he knew how to fall.

He took a deep breath, before pulling himself back up and landing. He glared at the boy, who looked shocked that he actually managed to not die.

“What the fuck?” Purpled said. He looked for his gun before realising it was too far away for him to grab.

Also considering the boy was holding it, shaking slightly.

Purpled looked at him. “You tried to throw me out of a fucking window!”

“And it didn’t even work!” The boy yelled back, he pulled the trigger, and Purpled dropped straight away. He grabbed a glass shard next to him, with very little care for the way it cut into his hands.

He pelted the glass at the boy, it landed in his hand, where Purpled had aimed it and the boy screamed. The boy dropped the gun and Purpled lept forwards, yoining the gun up off the floor. Before standing back on the boy’s wrist.

This time he stepped down. There was a snap and the boy yelled again.

The chip tumbled out of his hand, and Purpled didn’t move his foot as he picked it up. He held it in his hand for a moment, turning it over to make sure it was the right thing before nodding.

He looked at the boy, who had tears streaming down his face.

Purpled stopped standing on the boy’s wrist and nodded at him.

The boy looked up with the hatred of a thousand suns in his eyes. Purpled couldn’t find himself to care, not really.

So he stepped across broken glass and blood, leaving the boy who had been ranting about servers on the ground. And Purpled... didn't feel bad. And that thought was somehow more scary than anything else.

---

*"What do you mean you knew him?"*

*"He broke my wrist and handed my ass to me, that's what I mean. It took a bit for me to figure it out, but it's him. It's odd how much he's changed."*

---

"Favorite food?" Purpled asked. He was laying upside down on his bed. Feeling slightly normal for once. He was actually having some emotions, which was nice.

He earned them.

Punz rolled his eyes. "I enjoy pizza a lot, what about you?"

Purpled snorted. "I don't have many options" He gestured at the two empty bowls which had rice and curry in them. It was about all they ate.. "Once I had tacos on a mission... I really liked them."

Punz laughed. "Tacos are good—"

The door slammed open and it was terrifying how quickly they got into a tough fighting stance, smiles wiped off their faces.

Purpled had a gun out, no hesitation. It pointed at the eye line of *her*. Purpled put down the gun as quickly as humanly possible.

"Good." She said. Then left.

They didn't pick up their conversation again. Instead Purpled sat on the bed, posture straight and twisting a knife in his hand.

Punz went to sleep, perfectly still and quiet.

This was fine. They'd let their guards down too much anyway. They deserved that.

---

*"One day." A new voice, but not unfamiliar. "You're giving me your gear and I'm making it safer. This isn't happening again, Purpled. We care about you too much."*

*Huh. That sounds nice.*

---

Then the others.

Walli. Boomer. Hannah.

Walli... well, Purpled never learnt his power. All he knew was that Walli was smart, and a great fighter. He didn't seem to hurt himself when he jumped off high surfaces (maybe Avian) and couldn't stomach chicken.

Boomer... funnily enough Purpled never learnt his power either. He was quiet, and smart and really liked pickles. (Purpled didn't really get it.) He seemed to parent the other two, he was around the same age Punz was. In truth Purpled didn't have a lot to do with Boomer.

Punz did though.

Hannah, plants. She controlled plants but on sometimes, she was not as ruthless as Walli or as quiet as Boomer. She wasn't the best student, nor the worst. However, she was outstanding when it came to charisma, either that or the rest of them were just really fucking awkward. Shockingly she was the oldest, not apparent on their first meeting, but was evident in the way she would take the fall for all of them in days to come.

They were scared. When they first were dragged in, cowering behind Boomer.

Purpled looked at them all, then at Punz. "Was I that scared?"

Punz faltered for a moment, "I— you just cried a lot. You were very little, you wanted your parents."

Purpled paused, looking at Punz. "I— had parents?" He asked, voice breaking slightly. "Alive ones?"

"Yeah..." Punz muttered darkly.

"They're dead." Purpled said, voice flat and wanting to cry a little. "She killed them."

Punz didn't answer.

That was an answer in itself.

He looked back at the scared people, and she stood there. Arms crossed and expression fierce. She said something, and Hannah flinched back.

Hey, at least they all had their own names. Purpled had... Purpled. Was that even his real name? He didn't think so.

Then she stormed off, like she always did. Slamming the door shut, leaving five confused children.

Purpled raised a hand. "I'm Purpled."

Punz quickly took over. "Punz, we're— other students... welcome. We're underground, several locked doors. All our facilities are underground. Welcome... I guess."

The three kids looked at them expectantly.

Purpled looked back at them. "Get up." Purpled snapped, "Before *she* comes back."

And like that, everyone started scrambling to the door. Purpled closed it with a click, then looked at the three new people.

Even at the time, Purpled could see fight in their eyes. The unwillingness to survive if survival meant prison.

Yet, that was a problem for a future day. At that moment it was just them, a closed door and a life of threats.

"Walli." The boy who... was Walli, said. He had dark hair and that was about all the thought he put into how Walli looked.

Boomer wore a beanie and didn't have any hair. "Boomer..."

"I'm Hannah." Hannah had dark brown, wavy hair and a look in her eye that made Purpled scared of her. "And we're getting out of here."

Purpled looked at Punz. "Good luck with that... I suppose," Punz said, "Good luck then."

---

*"We care about you asshole. Whatever the fuck is going on in that head of yours, we'll sort it out. Tommy cares about you, Ranboo does—I do. So, please... let us help."*

*Tubbo. He knows that voice. Why is Tubbo—*

---

It was a fancy dinner. That was all. The reason Purpled was dressed in a tux, tie done up. Hair slightly less fluffy, it was odd. Odd to say the least.

He'd been trained for this. This was his perfect scenario. He'd changed his accent so slightly, the way he walked. It was all terribly exciting.

Purpled sat there, silently. Looking at the food on his plate, his mission was simple enough.

He just had to swipe a chip from the man sitting next to him. Easy enough.

A man with blond hair, and wings—a man that no one would leave alone.

Now. This meant a couple of things.

One. He was some sort of famous, and all of Purpled's training was useless.

Two. He had wings? Maybe some sort of superhero, he didn't really know. Purpled glanced at him.

He probably should know him.

Next to him was a teenager, tall with brown curly hair that curled over his forehead. He looked at Purpled, eyebrow raised.

"Who are you?"

"P—" he fumbled. He had been given a fake name, he knew that. He really did. He just couldn't remember what it was.

Landon.

Landon Parks.

Kid of... some unspecified rich person.

"Landon," Purpled said, making his voice sounder younger, and putting in more emotion than he normally would. "Who are you?" He tilted his head.

"Wilbur." The teenager mumbled, "Why are you here?"

"My Dad!" Purpled exclaimed, he was seven and had to act like a seven-year-old. "He said something about something, and he didn't want to leave me at home."

Wow. He sounded so energetic that he hated it more than anything else.

This is why people hated children. He wasn't exactly liking himself a whole bunch at the moment.

"Oh?" Wilbur looked at him, mirth in his eyes. He smiled slightly and Purpled found himself smiling back. "Me too, Dad wants me to learn how to communicate with rich people, or whatever—"

A tap on his shoulder and Wilbur whirled around.

"Sorry, Mister Soot, is this—" eyes landed on him. "Child bothering you?"

"No, no, no," Wilbur said and it was like a switch had flipped. His voice went slightly more expressive, and somehow even his accent became slightly more posh. "Mister Landon here is keeping me company."

Landon— oh yeah, his cover name.

A nod and the man scampered off.

Wilbur gave him a wide smile, teeth showing. He looked at Purpled something familiar In his eyes. Familiar... Punz looked like that sometimes, all-knowing.

"So, Mister Landon," Wilbur grinned. "I don't suppose you can charm people, because you're small and innocent."

"I very well can." Purpled replied, dropping his cheery tone because Wilbur dropped his first. "I am the child of a rich person, yes I can charm people."

Wilbur looked at him, expression flat.

Purpled glared back. He liked Wilbur, despite not knowing him. He was smart, and a little bit cheeky.

*She* would adore Wilbur.

Probably in a way that she'd never adored any of them.

But that was fine. Purpled had a mission to do and had seemed to befriend the man's son, or someone important to him.

This would be no issue. Slip a weak poison into Wilbur's drink so he would throw up.

Then the target would come running. Purpled would be concerned for his new friend, yolk the chip. Leave.

There. That simple. That complicated.

Another tray of drinks were passed around, and Purpled watched them longingly.

Wilbur snorted and stopped one of the servers. "Can we please have two milkshakes? What flavour Landon?"

Purpled floundered. He didn't know any flavours.

Chocolate? Vanilla?

Was it like ice cream?

"Vanilla." Purpled decided on, before realising... He didn't even like vanilla. Or chocolate. He liked caramel though—

"Caramel." Wilbur smiled politely.

Purpled was considering murder to get his hands on that milkshake.

But Punz had told him—

Punz liked vanilla. He would never understand the pain.

So... that was upsetting.

Soon enough their milkshakes came out and Purples sulked.

He refused to touch his milkshake. For two reasons.

Okay. He may have put a little poison in it.

The plan was Wilbur would take pity and they would swap. If the plan didn't work then... sad. Real sad.

But also, vanilla? The worst flavour. It was basically poison anyway, he was doing Wilbur a favour.

Wilbur looked at him. "Gonna drink that?"

He shook his head. He felt like a baby, it was still fine— just a little poisoned. But he didn't like it, dammit.

With an eye roll, Wilbur placed the worst milkshake with his own. Before sipping at it and nodding approvingly. "I like vanilla. It's probably my favourite."

Purpled bit down the urge to grab his knife and plunge it into Wilbur's neck.

And the night went on. Purpled stuck to Wilbur's side. Waiting for him to throw up—

And it happened. Very easily. Exactly an hour after Wilbur drank it. He lurched forwards, hand slamming over his mouth.

Purpled looked at Wilbur, still keeping up the act.

Then Wilbur fucking bolted, and Purpled was on his feet (not as fast as he could, but as fast as a seven-year-old was supposed to.) Then followed.

Followed to a bathroom where Wilbur was hunched over the toilet, sounding like death...

That wasn't supposed to happen.

Shit. Too much poison.

"Get Phil." Wilbur slurred. "Need—"

And Purpled had no audience to pretend to, no reason to do anything but leave Wilbur here...

Instead, he ran.

And started screaming the way only a child could. "Wilbur's sick!" He yelled. "He needs Phil!"

The man from earlier emerged. Blond. Wings. Kind eyes.

Purpled stopped in front of him. Then without thinking, grabbed Phil's hand and dragged him down the hallway.

The hallway that led to the bathroom.

The bathroom where Wilbur could die. And Phil went very pale, as he scrambled to call an ambulance

And after the ambulance had whizzed away. With Wilbur inside.

Purpled would cry. Not for the right reasons. Only to manipulate Phil.

It felt wrong, it felt... evil.

Phil hugged him.

Purpled stole the chip.

As he was being hugged and wiping his eyes on Phil's shoulders.

He stole it.

He returned back.

And he felt guilty. Even as *she* said it was the best he'd ever done and hugged him.

It didn't feel the same as Phil's hug.

---

*"And Wilbur— the weirdo doesn't like vanilla. Wait, you also don't like vanilla. I think you'd get along very well, Purps."*

*And oh— that statement hurts.*

---

"Now."

Walli squared his shoulders. Before stepping into the ring.

Hannah watched, hair in her face, slightly bloody, but much more dangerous than anyone gave her credit for.

Purpled crossed his arms.

*She* stood there, expression blank and nodding.

Hannah took a deep breath and got into her stance. There was something wild in her eyes, that had since been snuffed out in Boomer's and Walli's eyes.

And deep in his heart, Purpled knew Hannah was the bravest of them all, and that she would be the first to leave.

She had that fight. That wild look. The will to leave.

The others had stopped caring long ago.

Walli lunged first.

Purpled zoned out. To the sound of punches, muffled grunts and a few cries.

His mind didn't go anywhere really. He just looked at the wall, mind blank, somewhere there was a thought of his next mission. Somewhere there was concern for his own safety.

But he felt numb.

Someone hit the mat with an echo and a cry. Purpled snapped out of it.

Walli was on the ground, a cut on his forehead bleeding and breathing heavily.

Hannah dropped as well, but this one was out of concern. She snapped her fingers in front of Walli's eyes that stayed slightly unfocused.

Boomer also ran into the ring.

Purpled knew better, and stayed put.

Much to his shock, Punz also ducked under the ropes. Purpled stared. He honestly thought Punz was smarter than that.

Purpled stayed put.

Even *she* seemed concerned for a moment until Walli sat up. Her eyes turned to the group surrounding Walli. Cruelty and sharpness in them.

Punz didn't gulp or show any fear.

Apart from the slight tremor of his hands.

"Everyone is an opponent." She snapped and the thin ruler hit skin.

Hannah fell backwards. Holding the side of her face. Any fight died out with that.

Hey. They were all more powerful than *her*. Why couldn't they just... get rid of *her*? Purpled paused. Before pushing the thought away.

Huh?

That wasn't his thought—

He looked at the group in the ring, and Hannah's eyes were trained on him. Purpled stumbled back at just all the thoughts that entered his brain.

It was chaos, fear, anger and so many more emotions that Purpled couldn't pin down, not really at least. He took another step back and shook his head.

These weren't his. He wasn't scared—

Not like this anyway.

Not this loud fear. His fear was a quiet one that hadn't left him since he was born. It was... terrifyingly loud.

He took a deep breath and tried to steady his breathing.

If he was a distraction maybe they wouldn't get hurt as much—

That wasn't his thought.

He looked at Hannah in horror. Shaking his head. She looked confused for a moment, like she was realising something—

Then a vine dragged itself from out of the ground and around his neck and dragging him down.

Purpled let out a strangled cry. He couldn't breathe, he couldn't breathe—he needed to breathe.

Black spots appeared in his vision, and he kicked his legs with as much force as he could manage.

His lungs hurt.

He needed air.

And he passed out.

---

*"What's happening?" A voice desperate and familiar. "Ranboo, why is he hyperventilating?"*

*"He's remembering something. He's thrashing. Don't touch him, he can easily break out noses."*

*"But Ranboo—"*

*"Don't."*

---

"Here." Hannah said one night, and Purpled looked up at her. She put a bread roll on his plate.

He stared at it.

He wasn't supposed to be eating, he'd let the target go. Something about the big innocent eyes, pleading to live just... twisted something in him.

"Huh?"

"Here." Hannah said again, no room for argument, voice strong. It was almost nice, the concern under that tone.

It really was nice.

"You need to eat. Just eat this. I'll say I stuffed it down your throat if we're caught." Hannah looked at him with concern.

"Everyone's an opponent."

Hannah looked sad, she sat across from him. "I'm sorry no one told you differently. People are just that Purps, people. Not everyone is out to get you."

Purpled glared.

Hannah sighed, a sad thing. "Eat the roll. That's all I ask of you. Okay Purps? Eat the roll and you may live the rest of your life in relative joy."

Purpled huffed, he grabbed the roll and scarfed down. Hannah looks impressed and like she cares. And she does.

And Purpled hated it, just a little. Not a lot. Just a little.

"Thank you."

"No problem."

And that was it.

---

*"He's scratching—"*

*"Is it bad?"*

*"He's bleeding."*

---

“So,” Walli said, looking up at the roof and smiling slightly. “Then what I basically did was I punched the dude in the face—”

Hannah scoffed.

Walli gave her a look, nose scrunched up. Apparently quite offended by this, he opened his mouth, closed it and glared a little. “Stop interrupting me.”

“There’s no way you punched a kid, you’re the weakest thing I’ve ever met,” Hannah deadpanned.

“Shh,” Purpled snapped, “Tell me.”

Everyone fell silent, apparently everyone had the slightest soft spot for Purpled. And Purpled grinned, because of course he did. He got everyone else to shut the fuck up, so Walli could finish the story of school.

Walli sighed, “So I punched him, and then this teacher rocks up—”

“Bitch.”

Walli snorted, “Yeah.”

“What’s the cafeteria like?” Purpled asked, leaning forwards slightly. He watched Punz grin a little, before he leant back against the wall and closed his eyes. Purpled looked at Walli.

“Walli, you gotta tell me dude. What’s the cafeteria like?”

Walli sighed. “Loud.” He said, eyes slightly far away. “People bustling around for a place to eat. A bunch of... six-year-olds looking for food, and yelling at each other. Chairs scraping against the ground. Imagine the noise of us when it’s time to eat, but times that by... a lot. Okay?”

Purpled nodded.

“Then,” Walli grinned, “Basically, what you would do is put out your elbows. This was before I knew how to stab people—”

“You always knew how to stab people,” Boomer added, “It’s quite explanatory. You get a sharp object and—”

“Okay, okay, okay,” Walli waved his hand, “But you’d shove children out of the way, it was very fun. You’d love it Purpled.”

“Cool.” Purpled grinned, and Walli rolled his eyes. “What about classes.”

“Like ours.” Boomer muttered from the corner, peering up from underneath his beanie. “Slightly less getting hit with a ruler, but basically the same. Some old crone teaching us bullshit.”

“Boomer.” Punz said, voice firm, and eyes still closed. “Don’t.”

“Sorry, sorry,” Boomer muttered in a way that meant he wasn’t sorry at all. Laced with sarcasm in a way that was almost funny. “And then, there would be sports days,” Boomer continued. “Where you’d run the fastest. Sometimes they’d have science fairs, where you’d do some sciency thing and get judged for it.”

“That’s cool,” Purpled muttered, he shuffled so he was laying down on the floor. Eyes up on the roof and slightly sleepy as he blinked up at the roof. He was quite tired, if he did say so himself. It was almost (almost) funny. “What about... what did Hannah talk about?”

“Bread?” Hannah asked slowly, not quite sure.

“Mhmm.”

“It’s like the one we have. But it’s warm, and where I lived I could watch the person who made it. This nice couple, they have a daughter too, she’s nice. I think you two would get along very well.”

“Mhmm.”

“Well, their bakery was blown up...” Hannah added, sounding slightly regretful and Purpled sat up. Looking confused. Which Hannah took as an invitation to keep talking. Which she did. “Some house got blown up, some kid with random powers manifesting. Killed that entire family and blew up some houses nearby.”

“Oh.” Purpled blinked, “That’s... sad.”

“But not rare,” Punz added, as happy as ever.

Hannah and Boomer glared at him in perfect sync. Punz didn’t open his eyes, but flipped off Boomer in a way that seemed well practiced.

There was clacking heels, and everyone jumped. Purpled watched the way that everyone moved, almost straight away. Punz straightened up, his eyes opened. Walli stopped leaning on one of his arms, and actually stumbled to his feet. Boomer didn’t react much, but he straightened slightly. Hannah’s change was the most drastic (apart from his own perhaps), she sat up, back perfectly straight and hands folded into her lap.

Purpled eyed the door carefully, which swung open.

*She* stood there, scanning the room quickly. Before her gaze landed on Hannah. Hannah stiffened under the gaze, and *she* smiled slightly, a sick and twisted thing that Purpled hated more than anything.

“Hannah.”

“Ma’am.”

“Come with me.”

And Hannah went with obedience, standing up almost perfectly. No stumbling, instead she wiped her hands on her pants, and Purpled saw the way her hands shook just a little.

The door closed quietly behind them.

Walli and Purpled jumped up and stumbled towards the door. They fought for a moment to try and get the best spot for listening to the conversation. He leans against the door, trying to listen.

Punz grabbed both of them, before dragging them over to the other side of the room and sitting them down. Purpled glared but didn't move. Walli gave up a bit quicker and they all sat in silence.

There wasn't a lot to say.

Instead they waited for footsteps.

After what felt like a lifetime, Hannah stepped back into the room, face pale and hands shaking. She closed the door with a soft click. Before leaning against the said door, then looking over the lot of them.

She closed her eyes. "I need to get out of here."

And Purpled never knew what Hannah was told that day, only that she looked at him and there was some unfiltered fear in those eyes. Like she'd just figured out what Purpled could do.

In that moment of eye contact, millions of emotions flooded Purpled's mind, he blinked at Hannah and Hannah blinked back at him.

She was always the smartest when it came to other people's emotions. And the smartest when it came to figuring out Purpled's whole empathy thing. The fact he can feel... almost see emotions when he looked someone in the eyes.

Hannah looked at him like Purpled held everything evil in his eyes.

He doesn't.

But she looked like everything made of fear were in those eyes.

And Purpled's not a great person. But at that moment he felt like a monster.

---

*"Is he... good?"*

*"Does he look like he's good, Tommy?"*

*"Fair."*

---

First group mission.

Things went very wrong.

Purpled kept running, dropping his head as a bullet whizzed past his ear and embedded in the wall next to him.

He turned around and fired. Hitting one person in the shoulder and another in the shin.

The heroes had insurance anyway. This was fine.

He ducked again, letting out a small yell, and firing again.

This bullet embedded itself in someone's thigh and Purpled threw himself to the side. Where he had been exploded, and he felt the heat on his arm.

Fuck.

He peered over the building. There Hannah was standing, arms up. Purpled went to fire his gun and they made eye contact.

Hannah shook her head.

She needed an out.

This was her out, and who was Purpled to deprive her of it. In fact— he wanted out too.

He took a step, intending to land off the building and hand himself in.

Someone caught him around the waist and he hit the floor with a crash. He looked up, gun pointed.

Punz.

It was Punz.

"Let me go!" Purpled yelled, having so little care for who saw him, he wanted out. He needed to leave and no one would let him.

He fought against Punz, trying to get free. But he couldn't, no matter how hard he tried. He just... couldn't.

"Let me go!" Purpled cried again, only to have a hand slapped over his mouth. Tears sprung to his eyes as he tried to fight, to little avail. "Let me leave!"

"No," Punz said, little room for argument. "We didn't put in all that effort for you to fuck off."

And Purpled was probably an idiot at that exact moment. He was going to get in trouble, enough for several lifetimes.

He bit Punz.

Grabbed his walkie-talkie and twisted. "Boomer! Wallie! Courtyard, people who will get you free. Go!"

The walkie-talkie is smashed out of his hand. And Punz looked at him with the hate of a thousand suns.

Purpled... doesn't care.

His friends will be free.

"What did you do?" Punz snarled and Purpled just grins.

"Nice try asshole, now they're all free—"

Punz looked up frantically and Purpled drew his gun. The safety clicked off and he pointed it between Punz's eyes.

Punz stared.

"I can shoot you," Purpled said easily. "It's just a pull of a trigger. I've done it before. I'll do it again."

"You've never killed anyone."

"You taught me how to. It would be poetic." Purpled didn't move, and neither did Punz.

And they both knew that Purpled couldn't leave.

They both knew that Punz won't stop the others from leaving.

"She'll kill you," Punz said quietly. "She'll actually. Purps."

Purpled shrugged. The gun being held steady, feeling no fear. Not much of anything if he was completely honest.

Maybe he'd die.

But he was so tired of not being able to live.

He glances at Hannah, Walli and Boomer. His eyes bore into Hannah's.

*'We'll come back for you.'* Her eyes seem to say, she nods in confirmation, despite the handcuffs and the agents rough handling her. She was almost calm, and Purpled didn't feel much of anything.

They'd come back for him.

Apparently.

---

*They never came back.*

*Because that's what Purpled's world is. People don't really stay, not really.*

---

If Purpled was completely honest. He didn't remember a lot after that day, after Boomer, Hannah and Walli were forced into that car, and Punz had kept him trapped in hell.

The days became fuzzy.

Well... fuzzy was a nice word for it, he'd say that he was simply so detached that he couldn't feel anything. He couldn't be anything. He went silent, he ignored as Punz stopped looking at

him with concern, and instead competitiveness.

They moved. To an apartment. Purpled remember that

The windows were the most beautiful thing that he'd ever seen. When the sun set on that first day, he found himself staring out the windows. Staring at the soft hue of the sky, over the peaking buildings of the city.

He supposed that *she* knew they weren't escaping. That long ago she'd beaten the fight out of these two.

Purpled got more and more familiar with the feeling of blood under his fingernails, in his hair, washing out blood stains. Something in his brain had turned off, leaving... a shell of who he had been.

Sometimes he'd have moments when he'd... wake up. Was that the right word? And he'd just look out at the sun, he'd maybe read or watch TV, then *she* would show up and Purpled would shut down again.

He got a bit more familiar with backhands, to the point where they felt more like a poke than anything painful.

But the sun was pretty, sunrises and sunsets.

Life was... okay, not good, not bad. Just kinda there.

Then one day, there was yelling. Purpled snapped out of doing the dishes. He looked up and at the door where he could hear the yelling. He couldn't be bothered to tune into the yelling and screaming, instead it became the background music.

There was something smashing, and a scream.

Then... silence.

That was what made Purpled jump and stumbled towards the door to the room where the screaming had been coming from. He flung open the door and stumbled into the room, hand hovering over his gun.

And what he saw was this:

Blood on the floor, only small amounts. A large window, one that Purpled had stared out of for... what had to be hours. Punz stood at the edge, hands pressed over his mouth and eyes blown wide.

Purpled stared, and like that everything snapped back together.

He looked at Punz, who had a cut on his forehead, and the broken glass on the ground. Some of it was green, (from a beer bottle) his mind supplied him easily. He took a deep breath.

Both of them looked at each other before Purpled peered out the window.

Holy shit.

That threw a fucking spanner in the works.

Purpled looked at Punz, finally finding his voice. "We gotta go."

"Yeah..." Punz said, eyes still wide. "Yeah... I guess we do."

And that was the long and short of it.

Because they took off, away from the building and structure that had defined their lives for as long as Purpled could remember. And... he felt everything but nothing.

But he was free.

Now what?

## Chapter End Notes

Thank you Kero! For... everything! They are so cool, and helped my characterisation *so* much, and are the reason that tinaaos kicks off, and the reason I wrote this fic. Kero... you are so cool and I love you so much /p, thank you for everything.

Side Note: all the characters that have a "cameo" are there for a reason, wilbur, phil, the boy. >:D

One of... three, two more to go babyyyyyy. I hope you enjoyed, feel free to give me a long rant over how amazing this is /j. Enjoy what is it come!

Join the [discord!](#) (feel free to join!) it's fun!

# survival

## Chapter Summary

survival.

the second reason purpled learnt to be strong.

## Chapter Notes

Hi all! It's been a hot second, but I come back with 10k words! Hope you all enjoy and if you don't then... don't read?

**Warnings:** implied/referenced child abuse, guns, violence, child abandonment

Let me know if I've forgotten any, and I will add them.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Purpled woke up, he sat up slowly. Blinking trying to put the puzzle pieces together in his head. What happened? He looked around, trying to see if he'd been captured.

No.

He was at Tommy's apartment. He sighed, and facepalmed slightly, before standing up. His legs were shaky. Glancing out the window he found out that it was extremely late considering that it was dark.

He'd left his apartment early this morning, he sighed, rubbing his face. Trying to find a way to stop his legs from shaking— he isn't supposed to be scared— no he was allowed to be scared. He was allowed to have emotions, he was allowed to voice those emotions and have reactions to his life.

Still, he tried to stop himself from shaking.

“Purpled?” A soft voice, and Purpled in complete honesty jumped and whirled around. He grabbed a dagger and was vaguely aware it was under someone’s chin as he moved.

Purpled blinked a couple times, before realising. *Oh shit*. That was Ranboo, that he was about to stab in the throat. He took a step back, dropping the knife onto the floor with a clatter.

His brain was going a million miles, so many thoughts that he couldn’t latch onto. Just... so many, so many things happening in the back of his brain at once. It made him want to start screaming and throwing things.

Most of them were panic.

A panic that made Purpled stumble back slightly. “Sorry, sorry, sorry,” Purpled shook his head. “Wait no— I.” He cut himself off, because he wasn’t a complete idiot who hated being alive. “I’m gonna—”

He gestured at the door. “Go.” He stumbled slightly, almost falling straight onto his face but managed to keep it together for a moment.

“Purpled.” Tubbo said and Purpled paused, hand on the door handle. “Are you okay?”

Everyone in that room knew it was a stupid question.

“I need to go,” Purpled eventually managed.

He couldn’t have emotions in front of other people—

What? Yes he could.

No.

Purpled opened the door.

And in truth he sprinted back to his apartment.

Like really ran.

He skipped a couple of the stairs before fumbling to unlock his apartment door.

His apartment was lonely, it had been that way the entire time he'd had it. It was always so quiet, and for what? It was also small, a studio apartment that didn't really serve much more of a purpose than where he kept weapons.

The kitchen was small, with very little clutter. The only thing that showed anyone lived here was a dirty plate he hadn't gotten around to cleaning yet. But that was happening soon.

Purpled's body went on auto-pilot mode. He opened the fridge, noticing just how empty it really was.

He took a few more steps.

Then opened the weapons cupboard. Knives, guns, swords, an axe, ninja stars, everything was there. In their spots, sorted by what types of weapons they were. Then to his left was the table where he kept his favourite ones, knives, guns, the ones he still had emotional attachments to—

He looked at the small dagger. With the golden hilt, it was all gold, there was nothing practical about it at all, gold was not great for weapons. But... Punz had given him the knife.

With the first money Punz had earned after shoving *her* out a window. Purpled looked at it, before picking it up, he turned it in his hands. It wasn't much more than a flimsy prop knife, it would be good at a last resort.

He doesn't need this stupid fucking knife.

But he just can't seem to let go of it. Which is so fucking stupid. He doesn't even like this knife that much, it's dumb and useless and just a show of wealth, something that he doesn't need.

Still, he dropped it onto the small table with a crash.

He dropped to the floor, sitting and pulling at the edge of the carpet. Lifting up the floorboard and peering at the safe underneath, he grabbed the safe and pulled it to his chest.

Before entering the code and the safe opened. No money fell out, partly because of the way. And as always he counted it.

Putting it into neat little piles.

Realising it wasn't enough and then putting it back.

Purpled sat on the floor for a moment longer, just staring at the wall. This was fine. He was fine.

Sure he saw some of the things he really wished not to repeat, and sure, he was alone once again. And sure, he had freaked out at his only friends, but he was okay. He had to be okay. Because if he wasn't okay then— he'd shatter into tiny pieces.

Tommy and Tubbo and Ranboo were stronger than him. In the ways that mattered. He was scared of everything, he was scared of everything. Walking down some streets because he could almost see the blood that stained it.

Purpled wasn't exactly emotionally resilient. He wasn't a Tommy, or even a Tubbo. He would just ignore his issues, until they eventually went away. And it had been working, he just ignored it.

It appeared that couldn't work for much longer.

He put the safe back, standing up, his legs shook slightly.

"You're fine," Purpled whispered, trying to convince himself. "You're going to go to bed. And not have any nightmares."

Yeah that doesn't turn out to be correct.

---

*"You're gonna let him die if he doesn't pass this test?" Punz asked, it was slightly broken at the edges. "He's a kid— Eret he doesn't have anywhere else to go."*

*"I missed the part where that's my problem." A low, silky deep voice. One that still bounced around in Purpled's mind when he was trying to sleep. One that still haunts him slightly. "I am running a business here, not a charity case."*

*Punz grit his teeth. He looked at Purpled. "Purps, you gotta get through this."*

*"When I take these off, you're going to look at my eyes, okay?"*

*Purpled nodded and Eret removed their glasses.*

*For a moment Purpled just... felt.*

*And Purpled passed out.*

*He never passed that test.*

*And Punz left him to die.*

---

Sometimes Purpled wondered if he had passed that test, would anything have been changed? Anything that really would've mattered. Would he have turned out the same way that Punz had. A merciless monster whose only moral alignment was money.

Sometimes, late at night, Purpled wished that he did pass the test. And then he'd hate himself for wishing that, more than anything. He'd stare up at the roof silently, not crying but feeling a bone deep sort of sadness.

He hated himself on those nights.

That he wished to be an unfeeling monster.

That all the training to 'feel no emotion' had worked, the way it obviously had with Punz. Because that would've been so much easier, it would've been so much easier if that had worked.

Feeling was... too much. He hated it.

He hated himself.

Still, he stared at the roof.

He wasn't a monster, he wasn't unfeeling, he didn't work *just* for money. But he wasn't not all those things too. He wasn't an angel, he didn't feel much and he did work for money.

"I wish," Purpled said to the empty apartment, where the silence was *so* loud. "That the training had worked a little better."

But it hadn't.

Obviously.

It worked well. Because he hadn't left with Hannah, Boomer and Walli.

But not well enough that he was what *she* would've wanted.

Purpled didn't sleep well that night.

Or the next truthfully.

Or the one after that.

And six hours of sleep over three days apparently wasn't healthy.

“Daniel?”

“Who?” Purpled responded a gut response. Before realising that was him. Fake name, that was his fake name. He blinked a few times, “Oh. Yeah, sorry.”

“Are you alright?” Quackity asked slowly, “You’ve been out of it—”

*“Are you alright, Purpled?” A honey sweet voice that he hated more than anything. “You’ve been out of it recently. Not going to fail any missions, are you sweetie? You know what happens if you fail. We can’t pay you, and then you die out in the cold, you don’t want that, do you?”*

“Oh.” Purpled blinked. It appeared that this whole being drugged incident had affected him a lot more than he thought. “Sorry, I didn’t quite hear you.”

“Are you okay?” Quackity asked, voice gentle. “Should you take the day off—”

“No!” Purpled yelled, before slapping a hand over his mouth.

He was slipping. He was slipping, all his emotions were showing up on his face. That was something that he didn’t need. The whole feel no emotion thing wasn’t really working.

Feel no emotion. Show no emotion.

Wait fuck, no— he was allowed to have emotions.

Purpled stared at Quackity. “I am so tired.”

And then he promptly passed out.

*“Sleeping on the job. Come on Purpled, I thought you were better than that. Get the information and you can pay the bills.” The voice that Purpled hated more than anything, echoing around the room.*

*There was blood on the floor, blood he spilt. For what? Money?*

*“You’re better than this Purpled.”*

Suffice to say, Purpled pretty effectively scared everyone. The whole passing out thing. Apparently, he had stayed on his feet too, and only crumpled when someone touched him. Which was rather amusing.

However, Tommy was not so amused.

In fact, he was so not amused, that Purpled took one look at his face and started sprinting in the other direction. Purpled was not scared of Tommy, but he was scared of the fury that would come raining down on him.

So he hid behind Philza Minecraft, not one of his stronger moments. But he was quite simply terrified of Tommy.

Tommy could not beat him up around Philza Minecraft.

Phil started a conversation with Tommy, and Purpled *bolted*. It was quite amusing actually. That Purpled ran that fast away from Tommy.

Part of him didn't quite know why he was running so fast away from Tommy, the other part knew that he'd have to talk about his emotions. And Purpled didn't want to deal with that, so he ran to the lower floor.

He basically collapsed over the front desk and looked at Kristin. Kristin raised an eyebrow at him. Purpled struggled to breathe for a moment longer.

"Tommy— wants me to— emotions." Purpled managed.

Kristin laughed, "That seems a bit rich coming from him."

"Right?" Purpled wheezed, he had run very fast, he was supposed to be fit. It was probably a mess of exhaustion and adrenaline. "I will be hiding here."

*Purpled dropped behind the crate, slapping his hand over his mouth to try and stop the sound of him breathing. It was supposed to be a simple mission: go in, get out, get paid and then don't freeze at night.*

*He winced, noticing the blood dripping from his arm. Moving his hand off his mouth he wrapped it around the gash on his arm. It kept bleeding. Purpled grit his teeth, he was getting paid for this. Fuck this.*

*So with shaking legs he stood up. Clutching his arm that was bleeding too much and holding the gun by his side a little steadier.*

"—niel? Daniel?" Kristin said, and somehow that was what snapped him out of it. His fake name. Or Kristin's voice. "Are you alright? You... looked like you were in pain."

Purpled looked down at his arm, it was covered by his hoodie. But he knew what the scar looked like. He had been sitting on his floor late at night. Trying to stitch his own arm

together, blood had gotten everywhere, it wasn't infected however. It did leave a jagged scar that was a bit pinker than the rest of them.

He honestly tried not to think about it.

"Uh." Purpled said, "Kristin... what do you do when—" he took a deep breath. Pretending that these words didn't pain him to say. "You're struggling, and— yeah, you don't know what to do about it."

Kristin's expression softened a thousand times over. "You ask for help, Daniel."

"But— I've been fending for myself for so long, I should be able to deal with this. I should. It's not that difficult but—"

Why was he spilling everything to Kristin? Instead of anyone else, he had no clue. But Kristin was warm, and she was kind, and if the look in her eyes were anything to go off of then she didn't mind.

"Yeah," Purpled finished.

"Well," Kristin started, "I know you're friends with Tommy right? Maybe talk about what's bothering you, sometimes talking is the best thing you can do. It's a bit awkward, but he'll be there for you."

Purpled rubbed his eyes. "What if he isn't?"

Kristin hummed, "I reckon he will be. But I'm here if you want to talk."

"I've done so much illegal shit," Purpled muttered. "You'd have to arrest me."

Kristin pulled a face, “I wouldn’t.”

“Okay.” Purpled said, taking a deep breath. “I’ll talk to Tommy.”

“Okay.”

Which was why two days later, when Purpled had gotten some sleep (not a lot but at least some.) He was sitting up on a roof with Tommy.

They were both in their vigilante get up. Sitting on top of a roof.

Probably not the best place to be, but it was the place that he was regardless. He swung his legs off the side of the building.

The lights were blinding, Upper L’Manberg appeared to get so much more alive at night. Neon lights, people and cars honking. The cars zoomed through the streets, in truth Purpled didn’t know why they went here.

Maybe just to people watch.

Tommy didn’t say anything, which Purpled was more than grateful for.

Purpled took a deep breath. “When I was little, before I could remember. Apparently I was two. I was taken off of my parents, and they were murdered. According to the records, I died that day too but well... I didn’t.”

“Obviously.”

Purpled looked back over the street.

“It’s a long story.”

“I have all night.”

And yeah... they kinda did.

So he started at the beginning.

Tommy was a surprisingly good listener.

“Then Punz pushed her out the window—”

“Fuck yeah!” Tommy yelled, throwing his arms up in the air. “Good.”

Purpled snorted to himself. “That’s barely the start of it. We lived on the streets for a while...”

---

The rain pounded against the concrete and Purpled pulled the raincoat hood up. Punz pulled a face but he didn’t react to it. He just nodded slightly and grabbed Purpled’s wrist, it hurt the bruises already there. But Purpled didn’t say anything.

“Okay.” Punz said, his voice was slightly terrifying. It didn’t have that warmth it had a while ago. It was just... cold, almost. Like the rain that was bucketing down all around them. It soaked into his sneakers. “Purpled, you’re going to say you don’t know where your brother is.”

Purpled nodded.

The light flooding the alleyway was pink, it made the puddles look nice. Which wasn't Purpled's biggest worry but it was nice to watch the light-stained puddles have more and more raindrops join them.

Purpled was shoved out of the alley, he stumbled slightly before catching himself.

In complete honesty, Purpled just stood in the rain for a while. He didn't go to look for anyone. Instead he looked at the rain hitting the ground and his shoes and the way that seemed to swirl around him.

He did like the rain.

Then he kicked himself back into action. Just because he was free didn't mean that he could get sloppy, that he could just let the pair of them die because he was too stupid to do anything.

Once Punz had told him if he'd ever been lost to find a family. This didn't seem like the time to do that though. He looked over his shoulder.

Someone was following him.

He didn't panic, like he might've another time. Instead he crossed the road.

The person continued to follow him, and Purpled felt a pang of panic. He shouldn't have been feeling any panic. He knew how to handle this.

The alley he had emerged out of was close enough, and he didn't hesitate to walk forwards. Feet splashing into the puddles and Purpled looked over his shoulder. Yeah. He was being followed.

“What’s a nice kid like you doing out so late?”

Purpled had a couple of answers, lots of them involved threatening or murder. One of them involved confessing what he was doing exactly, just to get that moment of satisfaction. Instead he walked a bit faster.

He turned down the alley, hand darting to the gun by his side.

He stopped in front of the wall, before spinning around and pointing the gun at the person’s temple.

“Hey, hey, hey, relax.”

“I need your wallet.” Purpled said, holding the gun a little tighter. “I need your wallet and your watch. You can keep your credit cards, I want the cash that I know you have.”

“I— I don’t have any cash—”

“Yes you do,” Purpled said, “I know you do. You paid for dinner with a fifty dollar note and considering you brought a ten dollar pizza you have at least forty dollars change.”

“W—”

“Give me the money.” Purpled snapped.

The wallet was dropped on the ground.

“Okay, I am going to pick this up.” Purpled pushed the gun slightly more towards his temple. “And you’re not going to move an inch, got it? Then I’m going to pocket any money you have and give back the wallet. Cool?”

“You’re kind for a mugger.”

“I will put a bullet between your eyes.” Purpled said, sounding a bit too cheery. He picked up the wallet and went through it for a moment. He grabbed the spare coins and notes, before handing the wallet back to the man.

He stopped pointing the gun at the man’s temple and instead smiled. “Thank you for doing business with you. Now you can leave.”

The man sprinted out of there.

Purpled stuffed the coins into his pockets, only holding the notes in his hands. He straightened his shoulders, and looked as Punz entered the alley cautiously. He looked at Purpled.

He didn’t hesitate to give him the notes, then shoving his hands into his pockets to try and quiet the coins from clanging.

---

*“Well. That’s rough.”*

*“It wasn’t exactly great,” Purpled admitted, swinging his legs slightly more. He took a deep breath and sighed slightly. “Punz... I was never scared of him, it’s just... the way he acted to others scared me.”*

---

Purpled wasn't exactly scared of violence. It was something that had followed him around since he'd been rather young, and would follow him around until he was rather old. It was almost upsetting how some of his earliest memories were firing guns.

But something about Punz, was scaring him.

If they had been taught one thing it was that needless violence was a waste of time. It wasn't worth beating someone black and blue unless someone was paying them to do that. Purpled didn't really enjoy violence, it was more of a thing that he just accepted.

But Punz really, really was scaring him.

He was brutal in a way that Purpled hadn't seen before. Purpled would sometimes just watch as Punz got into needless fights, left countless people to bleed on the ground, like that would do anything apart from make people more hurt.

"Why?" Purpled had asked one day, watching Punz grin as blood seemed to spill towards their feet. Purpled hopped up on a dumpster. Trying to avoid the tips of his shoes being stained with blood. "I mean, they weren't doing anything."

Punz looked at him, smile falling.

He reached for Purpled, and Purpled darted backwards. Hitting his back against the wall.

Punz looked at him, eyes wide and grinned a bit wider. He laughed a bit louder, and Purpled wished that he could run so far away that he'd never see any of these people again. So that Punz's laughter didn't ring out in that alley, ugly and terrifying, like someone realising they're everything they've ever hated.

“You’re scared of me!” Punz yelled and Purpled kept his face as blank and stoic as he could. “You’re really scared of me. I haven’t seen you this scared of anyone since her.”

Purpled kept his expression blank, instead just looking at Punz.

“Why are you scared of me, Purps?”

Purpled grit his teeth. “I’m not scared of you. I’m scared for the other people who need to fight you.”

Punz grinned, and Purpled hated it. “Good.”

Purpled jumped off the dumpster again, avoiding the blood and the unconscious people. Part of Purpled prayed that they wouldn’t bleed out, he doubted it. Bleeding out was far more difficult than everyone gave credit for.

---

*“I hate him.” Tommy said.*

*“You hate him?” Purpled laughed. “That’s funny. I don’t think I’ve ever hated anyone as much as I hate Punz.”*

*“What did he do?” Tommy asked, floundering for a second before shaking his head. “I mean, why isn’t he part of your life anymore? You seemed to be fairly close when you were children.”*

*“We were,” Purpled confessed. “Really. We were. He was like— my brother I guess. But we were hungry, and Punz couldn’t find work and there’s one place that everyone goes when you can’t get work in L’Manberg.”*

*“Huh?”*

*Purpled sighs, “Sapphire Soldiers.”*

*“That’s a fucking weird name.”*

*“They were probably before you. They were this gang, and they’re probably one of the most competent gangs that L’Manberg ever had.” Purpled explained, “And they would basically take anyone in. Not me though.”*

---

The room looked like what Walli used to tell him school gyms looked like. It was just a large empty room, with a storage room. Although, there were guns hanging on the wall. And a chair sitting at the back of the room.

It was a good chair, it looked rather comfortable. Everyone knew that they were in charge here. Not Punz or Purpled, but they were in charge, Eret.

On the chair. There was someone who wore a cape with fluffy bits around the edge, their sides, and looked up. Arms and everything, it looked nice.

Purpled had tuned out. Promptly ignoring everything. Until he blinked a few times and zoned back in.

“You’re gonna let him die if he doesn’t pass this test?” Punz asked, it was slightly broken at the edges. “He’s a kid— Eret he doesn’t have anywhere else to go.”

“I missed the part where that’s my problem.” A low, silky deep voice. One that still bounced around in Purpled’s mind when he was trying to sleep. One that still haunted him slightly. “I am running a business here, not a charity case.”

Punz grit his teeth. He looked at Purpled, his expression was extremely scared and had care laced throughout it. “Purps, you gotta get through this.”

Eret sighed slightly, the sapphire necklaces moving as they stood up. Their hands darted to their glasses and they looked between Purpled and Punz. “When I take these off, you’re going to look at my eyes, okay?”

Purpled nodded and Eret removed their glasses. Pure white eyes, no pupils or irises or anything else. Eerily blank, and terrifying.

For a moment Purpled just... felt.

None of the emotions were his. Just a wave of emotions. Grief, sadness, confusion, shock, anger and behind it all just hatred. Hatred that seemed to overshadow everything else. Purpled stared, all the emotions welling up in his head.

There was so much, it almost hurt. He took a step or two backwards, blinking a few times, his head spun. Everything hurt and it felt like his entire world was just... spinning on it’s axis. Too much, too much. Too much was happening.

So much was going on behind Eret’s eyes.

So much...

And Purpled passed out.

When he woke up, he was sitting in an alleyway, it was raining, bucketing down everywhere. His clothes were drenched, his hair sticking to his forehead. Everything was dizzy and blurry, he tried to wipe the water out of his eyes.

Wow. They really just left him out in the rain. Purpled sighed, leaning against the wall.

Fine. Punz left him. Whatever, it didn't even fucking matter. He could handle being by himself, he wasn't a child anymore. He was eleven, he didn't need to be babied. With a sigh he dragged himself up into a sitting position.

He had no time to cry, he had to get somewhere. He had to get warm and he had to stop shivering.

It was raining.

No one would see if Purpled cried anyway. He buried his face between his knees and cried, for the first time in what had been for a long time. So he actually cried, tears rolling down his face. His shoulders didn't shake, and he didn't make noise.

To anyone it would've looked like a kid sitting there in the rain.

Eventually Purpled wiped at his eyes, despite the lack of anything it did. The rain pounded around him, and Purpled dragged himself onto his feet and rubbed at his eyes again. He squared his shoulders.

Whatever. He didn't need Punz anyway, he was better off alone.

First was to get out of these clothes. Second... find somewhere to sleep. Third, find a way to eat.

Okay. He could do this.

---

*“Huh? He just... left you?”*

*“Mhmm.”*

*“What the fuck?”*

*Purpled shrugged, looking up at the night sky. “It was what we were trained to do, I’m surprised he kept me around for as long as he did.”*

*“And he hasn’t even tried to get into contact with you?”*

*“No.” Purpled muttered, trying to pretend the validation of the truth didn’t sting. “He hasn’t.”*

*“What did you do next?”*

*“Found a way to eat.”*

---

Purpled held the jacket around him a bit tighter, his stomach growled and he pulled the hood up a bit higher. Bastards hadn’t paid him, and he was fucking hungry. Not so hungry he couldn’t handle it, he was basically trained to be able to handle it.

He gripped the knife tighter.

Still, he wanted food, and he was going to find it.

It was cold, on the brink of winter and it was getting warmer. He held the jacket a bit tighter, he could never find enough layers to keep himself warm. He always felt... cold, a bone deep sort of cold that he couldn't explain.

Purpled sighed, stretching his shoulders, before running his hands up and down his arms to *try* and stay warm. It didn't work very well, and Purpled kicked up a puff of snow in return. He glanced over.

There was someone standing there, with long brown hair and goggles resting on their forehead. Purpled shifted from leg to leg, gripping his knife tighter. The person across the road tilted their head slightly.

“Are you good, kid?”

“Fine.” Purpled snapped, turning around and walking to... well he didn't really know where, he hadn't thought that far through.

He had a knife on his person, he could probably take them in a fight. While they were slightly taller, it didn't look like they had much muscle—however powers were a whole other issue that Purpled didn't want to think about.

He should've brought his fucking knife.

But no. He didn't because... why? Because he apparently wanted to get attacked on the streets, that's why.

“I'm Kero,” the figure across the streets said. “I run the taco van down the road.”

“That’s nice,” Purpled said, continuing to walk, squaring his shoulders.

“If you ever need anything,” Kero continued, and Purpled repressed the urge to start running. “There’s always a free meal at the van... it’s on the house. Okay?”

“I’m not a fuckin’ charity case,” Purpled spat, before turning down an alley.

And he wasn’t.

He wasn’t a charity case.

But still, three days later he found himself at the food van. Arms crossed and looking up at Kero, and Kero who looked down at him, a slightly fond smile on their face.

“Yes?”

Purpled glared, “I’m not sayin’ it—”

Kero grinned, “Oh?”

Purpled turned around. He was able to survive being hungry and still be mostly functional for... a week? Was that the longest that he was trained for? He could probably stretch it a bit longer.

“Hey, hey, hey,” Kero said, words blending into one. “No, no, no. I was messin’ with ya, come ‘ere have a taco.”

Purpled turned around slowly, relaxing his grip on the knife.

“Purpled.” Purpled said, and that seemed like the biggest declaration of trust he could give, his real name. His real and proper name, the one that he really knew as his own.

Kero gave a short smile. “Nice to meet you, Purpled.”

And... that was how he made his first friend. Kero... who provided more than Purpled could ever explain, and ever would explain.

---

*“That’s how you know Kero?”*

*“Yup! Let me eat for free, got me groceries once and signed off so I could get my own apartment.”*

*“Oh.”*

*“Yeah. They’re cool.”*

---

Purpled ducked under a knife being swung, he whirled around, kicking his opponent in the chest who struggled backwards. Purpled glared, keeping his foot on his opponent’s chest. He pulled out his gun and pointed it at their forehead.

“Stay there.” Purpled snapped, “I will shoot.”

Eyes shot wide, and Purpled sighed.

“This really ain’t personal, I could not give less of a shit.” Purpled said, giving a small smile. “Can you give me the hard drive that my client asked for days ago?”

The eyes stared at him. “Who are you?” They blurted out.

And Purpled's biggest mistake was saying his own name. If he could redo that moment, then he’d at least give a fake name. “Purpled.” He responded, before being slightly horrified at himself.

“What sorta name is that?”

Purpled gave them a look, “I currently have a gun pointed at your forehead, maybe don’t insult my name.”

“Right, right, sorry.”

With an eye roll, Purpled looked up, holding out his hand. The hard drive was pressed into his hand, he took a step back, so that he wasn’t still partially standing on his opponent’s chest. They looked at him.

“Purpled,” they muttered.

With a nod, Purpled held the hard drive in his hand. It didn’t feel worth all the effort that people had gone through to get it. He weighed it, it was light. He’d assume it was the real one, or he’d come back later.

He spun around and walked towards the door.

Before there was a cry out, Purpled paused. He turned around. There was a girl there, who had a broken glass at her feet and wide eyes.

Well, it was a bar. He wasn't expecting beacons of joy and morality to be here. In fact everyone watched him hold this guy at knife point, and all that happened was that someone called for another round of shots.

Purpled looked at the girl, standing there—

“What are ya doin’ girl?”

“What the fuck are you doing?” Purpled snapped.

The man raised an eyebrow. Pretty sturdily built. Looked slightly like the girl. Ah. So her... father had brought her here.

Purpled raised an eyebrow, looking at the man and crossing his arms. “What the fuck are ya sayin’?”

“Dad—” the girl whispered, “Don’t— not worth it.”

“Quiet!”

There was a slap.

The girl stood there in shock.

Purpled’s reaction was immediate.

Knife thrown across the room and landed in the man's thigh who screamed. "Don't fuckin' hit your children."

And that. That was the story of how Purpled became Purpled, protector of children... apparently. Something that he never really wanted. But... he'd take it.

He squared his shoulders and left.

---

*"That's how you got that name?" Tommy laughed, throwing himself backwards so he was laying on the roof. "You stabbed someone's asshole dad?"*

*"Yeah."*

*Tommy sighed, "Would you stab my dad, if you met him? If he was still alive?"*

*Purpled looked at Tommy, Tommy who still watched every movement out of the corner of his eye. Tommy had people who wanted to be like fathers to him, and people that Tommy had dropped because of that, because he looked at them and just saw his dad.*

*"Yeah," Purpled replied. "Wouldn't fuckin' think about it. Would just do it."*

*"You don't even know what he looked like."*

*Purpled looked at Tommy.*

*“Like you,” Purpled looked straight ahead. “But if all the kindness and love in your face was taken away. Replaced with something cold. He looked like you— but has nothing that makes you, you.”*

*“I don’t look like him,” Tommy muttered, “That’s like sayin’ Tubbo looks like his parents—”*

*“He does. We both know it.”*

*“We’re not like them,” Tommy muttered again.*

*Purpled thought of Punz, how people used to confuse them for brothers. Same blond hair; deadpan expression and accuracy with a gun. He knew that he couldn’t look in a mirror without seeing the man who left him for dead.*

*“No,” Purpled said, “We aren’t.”*

*And that was that.*

---

Purpled was a mercenary. That simple and that complicated. But it appeared he was slowly becoming some sorta vigilante—

He didn't want to be a vigilante.

But— abuse. He couldn't let that happen when he had the ability to stop it.

It appeared every vigilante had their own area of expertise and hatred. One that they could not stand no matter what—

Purpled's was abuse.

"Don't touch me!" Someone shrieked.

They went quiet.

Purpled spun on his heel straight away, darting across the rooftops before stumbling forwards.

He paused at the edge of the building.

The house across the way, had a window without a curtain closed. A woman was standing there, hands up in front of her. Another woman was towering over her, and Purpled knew what that meant—

Purpled braced himself, gripping onto the edge of the building.

He couldn't really make this jump.

But still.

He threw himself across the gap, feet ready to hit the glass.

The glass shattered around his feet, falling onto the ground in shards and kicking the attacker in the chest. The attacker staggered backwards, and Purpled kicked out a leg, which made the attacker thump onto the broken glass.

She looked up at Purpled with wide eyes.

“Don’t.” Purpled snarled, kicking her in the leg a bit harder than he should’ve. “Fucking try that shit again, and you’ll be found in parts on the pavement.” Purpled grinned underneath his mask. “Okay?”

“This is breaking and entering!”

Oh fuck. It was.

He’d just broken the window. And had entered private property.

Purpled stared. “Fuck. I’m gonna at least take something then,” he walked into the living room. There was a fancy looking computer there. “Who does this belong to?”

“Hers,” the other girl muttered, the one who wasn’t lying on the ground in pain and instead got up onto her feet. “I can’t touch it—”

Purpled grinned before picking up the computer and smashing it against the ground a couple of times. “Fucking dickhead,” Purpled grabbed a chunk of computer and threw it.

It hit the bitch with a good clunking noise.

And there was a reason that Purpled was the “protector of children”.

---

*Purpled sighed, leaning against Tommy’s shoulder slightly and Purpled did nothing about it, instead just sighing.*

*Tommy sighed too, "Pretty intense past."*

*"Yeah."*

*Sometimes... sometimes Purpled wished he knew Tommy before. When they were both young, when they could both do something. When they were both able to fight rather than just... get treated the way they were treated...*

*Sometimes, Purpled wishes he could save Tommy from whatever happened to him. But he couldn't.*

*They couldn't.*

---

When Purpled was thirteen, almost fourteen (at least that's what he decided.) He met someone so incredibly remarkable that his life was changed forever.

Thomas Innes.

Thomas Underscore?

It was difficult to keep track of the names that Tommy had been through at the time. If Purpled remembers correctly, he still went by Innes.

Anyway, he met Tommy.

Something he has never told Tommy was how, and why they met. Because why the fuck would Purpled tell more secrets?

It was a client who asked for it.

This vigilante, or some pest rising in Logstedchire. The place that Purpled reluctantly called home.

His apartment was in Kinoko. Yet he found Logstedchire familiar, a little bit grimy, and very easy to operate from.

The gist of it was this:

Some dude was trying to do some sorta crime, then this guy showed up. Showed up with ridiculously overpowered abilities and handed everyone's asses to them.

Purpled needed a new pair of shoes, so he took the job.

That was how he ended up in a bar, far too young to be at the bar. Yet he was standing there, against the wall, scanning for the vigilante.

It was loud, and Purpled was promptly avoiding eye contact.

The door opened.

And that was Purpled's guy.

He looked far too awkward. Shoulders bunched, babyface, maybe a bit older than Purpled?

With a sigh, Purpled pushed off the wall.

Under the lights, it was hard to see what colour his hair or even eyes were, but they had light hair.

Purple squared his shoulders, before looking down at his phone. In a way that looked like habit, but he knew what he was doing.

His shoulder slammed into the other's, and Purple staggered back a little.

"Holy shit," Purple exclaimed, he wasn't quite sure why his voice went more French.

Damnit, first rule was to keep the accents together. He should've at least used Canadian, people thought they were trustworthy—

"No issue, no issue," they responded, with an awkwardly loud laugh. "Hi, I'm Tommy—"

He held out his hand.

Purple took it.

Also at that moment, with his other hand, he slipped a small chip into the jacket pocket.

"Uh—" he had to think of a fake name and fast. "Harley."

"Ah," Tommy said and there was something behind his eyes. "No last name?"

"Not one that matters."

"Mhmm," Purpled leant back against a table, pulling a face. "Logstedchire?"

"Yeah," Tommy actually looked surprised. "How'd ya know?"

"Accent." Purpled deadpanned. "Slightly too British for Upper L'Manberg and you slur your words together?"

"Where you from?" Tommy asked, leaning against the wall. Grinning at him, there was something excited there, something that latched onto the first thing that understood him slightly.

Purpled dropped his eyes to the floor.

No eye contact.

"Uh." Purpled panicked for a split second—

He was trained better than this—

Fuck off, he wasn't fucking trained. Dogs were trained. He was just— yeah, he was trained.

"Raised in Upper L'Manberg," Purpled drawled. "Living in Kinoko, working here."

"Yeah, your accent is a mess."

Purpled raised his eyebrows, okay. This Tommy kid knew accents, far more than the usual person.

That was... interesting. Most people weren't that good with accents, and even fewer could pick the mess of an accent that Purpled's naturally was.

Okay. Do not underestimate him then.

"So," Purpled said, "You don't look old enough to be here."

"Oh!" Tommy exclaimed, "I'm not, I'm waiting for my friend Deo—" he cuts himself off.

*Deo?*

Fucking— Deo? Why does this vigilante child have contact, apparently regular contact with Deo?

"The— crime boss..." Purpled slowly says. "Why are you involved with underground crime rings?"

"Why do you know about underground crime rings?" Tommy challenged.

"You work for him?"

"What? No! He owes me."

"For?"

"Ruining my childhood." Tommy deadpanned, glaring slightly. Not a lot. But slightly.

It was funny—

Purpled laughed. "How the fuck does a crime boss ruin your childhood specifically?"

"Not specifically," Tommy waved a hand. "Well— long story."

With an eye roll, Purpled gave a nod. "Well. I'll see ya around, I 'spose."

Tommy nodded back, something almost knowing in his eyes. "Sure."

And Purpled slipped out of the bar.

Almost feeling bad about the tracking device that he'd put in the jacket pocket.

His home wasn't much. But it was a home.

He was safe here.

Still, he locked his door behind him.

It was barely a studio apartment. With room that struggled to fit a double bed and a tall skinny cabinet.

It did have a built in wardrobe, which was useful.

Off to the left was a kitchen that was somehow smaller than the bathroom, and rather empty. Purpled wasn't amazing at cooking, but he could follow instructions easily—

Too easily.

He sighed, dropping the knife onto the kitchen bench and dragging out the scrappy excuse of a laptop.

Now. Where was the afamed vigilante? Nameless, but still there.

Putting the overlay on top of maps, he watched Tommy dart across buildings. Hey, it was already time for him to patrol?

Purpled glanced at the time, only five yet. Okay. That's interesting.

He leant back on his bed, looking up at the roof. Before grabbing his phone and looking at his bank accounts.

Okay. Daniel Greyson was broke, but that was fine because that's the worst cover anyway. Being a normal teenager— so boring.

Harley Davidson (original name, he's aware.) Was significantly less broke, which made sense considering that he was the account that any virtual payments go through.

Jackson Keetings is going even better. He got the cash jobs, the ones that the Logstedchire banks don't question when Purpled slammed a wad of cash on the counter. (And a bit extra so no one asks questions.)

His safe was even fuller, hidden under his bed only able to be opened by both a key around his neck, and a lock code that Purpled remembers.

No one else would guess it—

Well... not no one else.

No one else who matters.

Purpled looked back at the screen, Tommy is still on the move. Just moving about on top of a building, probably fighting someone.

He grabbed the shitty pair of headphones he's owned since he was like... twelve and plugged them in.

Then the audio.

It was mostly static, with the odd hitting noise.

Boring.

Purpled sighed, rolling over so he was laying on the bed. Watching the red dot move and the audio do nothing of value.

Then the red dot stops.

And doesn't move.

With a groan, Purpled dragged himself off the bed. Shoving on the purple hoodie he loves so much, and the mask and goggles he tended to use when doing the more risky jobs.

He hopped out the window, dragging himself up onto the roof. Holding his knife in one hand, and praying this wouldn't be a terrible ambush.

It probably was going to be.

The building Tommy went silent on was a bit up.

Purpled hopped onto it. Looking around for anything worth his attention.

Nothing was wrong—

Oh shit.

Pain shot through his back, as Purpled was acquainted with the concrete floor. He swore, rolling over and getting up on his feet.

Vigilante— Tommy—

"You tracked me?" Tommy yelled, "The fuck do you want with me?"

"Money," Purpled replied, taking a step back and pulling out his knife. "Nothing personal. For what it's worth I'm supposed to bring you in alive—"

"Oh. That's a relief." Tommy deadpanned.

His fingertips were sparking red.

Right. Okay. That was decidedly odd.

Purpled swung with the knife, and Tommy darted backwards.

Before Tommy returned with a punch, one sloppy enough that Purpled managed to twist Tommy's arm around his back and make him topple to the ground.

A hand grabbed his ankle, and Purpled was yanked down on the ground too. He fumbled for his gun, before pointing it at Tommy's head.

Both of them froze on the ground.

"I can jam the gun—" Tommy said.

Purpled fired the gun.

It was never going to hit Tommy, instead planned to soar past him and land in the side of the next building across. Ideally hitting a wire and sending out the power so nobody saw this.

Instead it exploded in his face.

Guns didn't even do that—

Purpled threw the gun to the side, trying to ignore his singed gloves and hoodie and mask. Also his hair, he'd have to cut that in a moment, get rid of the burnt edges.

“How the fuck?” Purpled yelled, getting onto his feet and drawing his knife, “Guns don’t even do that! Bits just break then they don’t fire, they have those safety measures for a reason —”

A leg flew up, kicking him in the face. He stumbled back slightly before blinking a few more times. “Asshole!” Tommy yelled, staggering to his feet. “You tracked me!”

“Don’t wear the same hoodie!” Purpled yelled back, “Rule one of being a vigilante.”

“You’re not a vigilante asshole, you get paid to be a dick!”

Purpled threw himself forwards.

Knocking Tommy in the side who yelped. They hit the ground in a heap, something that Purpled was more than comfortable with. He’d sparred with Punz and Boomer and—

Yeah. Enough.

Purpled grabbed Tommy’s wrist and started bending it back—

“No, no, no, no!” Tommy cried out, “I don’t have insurance, I don’t have insurance— please don’t break my wrist. I’m literally on the streets.”

“You’re literally part of a crime ring?”

“Not part!” Tommy yelled, trying to break his arm free to no avail. “I’m just there! They owe me one, and in return they don’t let me starve.”

“You know *Deo* !”

“I— yeah.”

“Who’s to say they’re not involved with the fighting rings?” Purpled challenges, bending Tommy’s wrist back a little and Purpled watches Tommy try to get away, just a small flinch.

It says enough.

It says that this isn’t the first time Tommy has been manhandled like this, and it says that everything in Tommy’s bones is fighting to leave. To run, yet he stays there, mostly still.

“They’re not! They’re not!” Tommy yells, “Don’t break my wrist! I can’t afford to get that fixed. At least stab me! That’s covered!”

“By what?”

“Logstedchire hospitals—”

Purpled lets go of Tommy’s wrist. Tommy staggers forwards, holding his wrist with his other hand and looking at Purpled. Eyes wide and concerned... concerned to say the least.

Purpled was supposed to bring in Tommy—

But he couldn’t.

He’d... do it some other time.

Just... not today.

And somehow... Purpled found himself spending time with Tommy. Both in costume of course, never out of costume. Purpled held his cards as close to his chest as possible, and Tommy didn't say much.

But still.

Purpled had cancelled the contract.

He was... okay with that, he was learning to be okay with that. He would never tell Tommy, not even years later when they were sitting on a roof talking about Purpled's past.

But... he did. He cancelled that contract.

Which would turn out to be the best decision of his life.

Tommy's and Purpled's buddying friendship went a little bit like this:

*"We're not gonna do get help." Purpled deadpanned, looking up at the roof. "I still have a huge bruise from last time."*

*"I think we are."*

*"No. We're not." Purpled's hand itched towards his knife. Whether that was to stab himself or Tommy was left to be decided.*

*"Come on," Tommy groaned. "You love it."*

*“I hate it.”*

*“It works every time,” Tommy reasoned.*

*“And every time I get hurt.”*

*“Any other plan then, genius.”*

*“No.” Purpled grumbled.*

*“We’re doing it.”*

*“No, we’re not.”*

*They were.*

*Purpled had gone limp and was being dragged by Tommy, it was not comfortable. And Purpled wondered how exactly Tommy had persuaded him to actually agree to this. Purpled sighed.*

*Fine.*

*“Get help!” Tommy screeched, “Get help, he’s dying, help him—”*

*Then Purpled was flying through the air, hitting three guys with his body. Before he hit the ground with a crash,*

*Purpled stayed there. Mostly out of spite.*

*He looked up at Tommy who was grinning like he'd just solved a maths question or something. Purpled just glared, trying to get the sheer amount of hate he felt through his eyes.*

*"That was amazing."*

*"I hate it." Purpled dragged himself back up onto his feet and glared at Tommy. "It's so embarrassing."*

*"Not for me," Tommy said, before flipping him off.*

*"I hate you."*

Or it went a bit like this: (on the good days of course.)

*"I'm fucking going to kill you!" Purpled shrieked, throwing his gun across the roof so it hit Tommy in the forehead.*

*Tommy screamed, before throwing a knife back at Purpled.*

Or sometimes it went a bit like...

*"DON'T YOU FUCKING BLEED OUT PURPLED... PURPLEDSON, OR I AM GOING TO FUCKING KILL YOU MYSELF."*

*"Some fuckin' stitches would be helpful then," Purpled spat back.*

*“YOU ARE IN NO STATE TO MAKE DEMANDS, HOW THE FUCK DO I DO STITCHES?”*

*Purpled stared at the roof. “How are you still alive?”*

*“FUCKING SPITE, WHERE’S THE FIRST AID KIT?”*

And... that was how Purpled and Tommy became that, Tommy and Purpled. Through some botched missions, some failed training and an all-nighter.

---

*“Okay, in my defense. I did not know how to do stitches.”*

*“I know!” Purpled yelled, laughing as he said so, “I still have the scar, it’s a miracle of nature it didn’t get infected. I know you didn’t clean the needle.”*

*“It was new!”*

*“You still clean it,” Purpled laughed and shook his head a little bit more, “Honestly, you don’t know how to do stitches.”*

*“I do know!”*

*“That’s... concerning.”*

*“Ranboo taught me.”*

*“Huh.”*

---

“Train me!” Tommy said one day, the night was still young, and so were they. Tommy had recently had his fourteenth birthday (legally his seventeenth...). Purpled looked at him lazily, before rolling back over.

Sure. Napping on the roof wasn’t the most comfortable thing ever, but Purpled had slept in a dumpster before. He could handle this.

“Fuck off,” Purpled slurred, flipping off Tommy and Tommy glared like it annoyed him specifically. “I gotta early job tomorrow.”

“So go to bed?”

“No.”

“Okay then,” Tommy sighed.

For a moment everything was quiet, and lovely.

“Purps.”

“Don’t call me that.”

“Purpled, please. My powers are faulty at best, and I know jackshit about hand-to-hand. Please... it can just be an excuse to beat me up for an hour. Please.”

Purpled groaned and sat up, “No powers.”

“No powers,” Tommy confirmed.

“I’m not gonna hold back.”

“I don’t expect you to.”

Purpled stood up, cracking his knuckles and his neck. He sighed again and rolled his eyes as he flexed his fingers. He gestured to Tommy, and Tommy also stood up he shook out his hands.

“Okay,” Purpled said carefully, not moving. “First lesson. Everyone is an opponent.”

“Everyone— that seems a bit harsh.”

Purpled gave Tommy a look, before lunging forwards and managing to get a good punch in the jaw. Tommy yelped and fell back onto his ass, Purpled gave him a look, before raising an eyebrow.

“I’m the opponent right now, we are not friends.”

“Does that imply the rest of the time we are?”

“No,” Purpled hissed, “I don’t do friends. You shouldn’t either.”

Tommy huffed standing up and shaking out his hands, “You’re being a right asshole right now.”

Purpled paused... yeah. He was.

“You wanted to be taught.”

“*Taught*, not beaten up,” Tommy muttered before shaking his head and jumping up and down on his feet. Shaking out his hands, he got into what was a dodgy starting stance to begin with.

Purpled huffed, stopping himself from smiling. But certainly amused. “Stance is wrong, too much weight forwards. Also don’t hold your fist like that, thumb on the outside of the fist or you’ll break your thumb.”

Tommy did that, before looking at Purpled expectantly... which, fair.

Purpled got into his own stance. “Engage.”

“Huh?”

“You do the first offence,” Purpled muttered, rolling his eyes. “I defend. Exhibition rules.”

“Exhibition rules?”

“It means,” Purpled sighed, “Real punches are allowed. It means we take turns to attack and defend. It’s easier to learn that way.”

Tommy grinned, “Oh this’ll be easy—”

Tommy swung, Purpled grabbed his wrist, before yanking it to the side, and flipping Tommy onto the concrete. Tommy wheezed for breath, obviously winded and Purpled felt slightly bad because of it.

Not completely.

Just slightly.

Tommy wheezed, sitting up. “What the fuck man?” He spat out.

“Balance was off,” Purpled said, “That’s a defensive move.”

“Who the fuck trained you?” Tommy spat, “What sorta psycho—”

Purpled glared.

Tommy went quiet before standing up.

With a sigh, Purpled got back into the fighting stance. “Now I attack, and you defend. It’s a fair deal. Okay? Got it?”

Tommy nodded his head.

Purpled went for a punch to the shoulder, which Tommy blocked.

He then ducked and swept his leg out, making Tommy stumble back. Then it was a matter of merely shoving him a little bit and he fell backwards.

Tommy stared. "How?"

Purpled grinned, not careful enough to school his own emotions. "You were off balance from the block, too much weight on your left foot. I swept that out, you had no balance so I just shoved you."

"Oh." Tommy blinked. "Okay then."

Purpled grinned. "Again?"

"Sure."

---

*Tommy laughed, "You were an ass while we were training."*

*"But it worked, did it not?"*

*Tommy rolled his eyes, shoving at Purpled's shoulder. "I suppose... one might argue that it did something."*

*Purpled smiled a bit wider. "Who else would've taught you, Tubbo and Ranboo?"*

*"I didn't even know them!"*

*Purpled laughed, nudging Tommy's shoulder with his own and grinning. "Remember, you came to me for advice on trying to befriend them."*

*Tommy shook his head and covered his face, "No, no, no, we agreed to never speak about that!"*

*"Oh, I'm speaking about it!"*

---

It was quiet. Tommy had a gnarly black eye, and Purpled's lip was bleeding. He glared at Tommy, before holding the tissue away from his lip to examine it. It looked... alright, he couldn't see anything wrong with it. But still, it was bleeding.

"Asshole," Tommy spat.

"It was just training!"

"You used your powers!"

"You used yours first!"

"I can't control them!" Tommy yelled back, before huffing and looking out across the building. Pouting slightly and glaring at a window like it had personally attacked him. "You hit me and I freaked—"

"You don't normally do that!"

"Fuck off," Tommy spat, "As if you don't freak out whenever I get a proper hit on you."

Both of them looked away from each other, in opposite directions and glared at the buildings on either side of them. Purpled crossed his arms, before huffing again and refusing to look at Tommy.

“I hate you,” Tommy snarled. “You’re a bitch.”

“I don’t care.”

They both fell silent again.

Purpled picked at a scab on his ankle, probably not healthy, but it’s what he did nonetheless. He sighed and glared a bit harder at the scab on his ankle, like that could get across how much he wanted to punt Tommy across the room.

“Fuckin’ powers,” Purpled muttered. “I hate your powers.”

“They’re cool. You have what... guns.”

“I have another power.”

“Oh?” Tommy asked, rolling his eyes, “Mister Mercenary has a trick up his sleeve?”

“Mister Mercenary is going to fucking strangle you, and get the money in return for your dead fuckin’ body.”

Tommy looked at Purpled, glaring, “I’d like to see you try.”

“Oh bet—” Purpled said before launching himself at Tommy. They both tumbled on the concrete of the roof, and Purpled paused before moving backwards and crossing his arms.

“Pussy.”

“Fuck you.”

“Fuckin’ do something, bitch.”

“No.”

“All talk? Scared to hurt me?”

“Not scared to hurt you—”

*Scared of what you become if you do.* A voice that wasn’t quite his own whispered in the back of his brain. It sounded like Hannah... the logical part of his brain usually did, which made sense.

Purpled huffed.

“Coward.”

Purpled ignored him, and ignored just how much he wanted to throw Tommy off the fucking roof—

“Please, as if hurting me is the worst thing you’ll ever do.”

Purpled looked at Tommy. “What the fuck does that mean, asshole?”

“You’ve killed people!”

“I have not!” Purpled yelled back, looking at Tommy. “What the fuck is that even supposed to mean?”

“It means you’re a shit person!” Tommy yelled back.

Both of them fell quiet again.

“Purpled— I’m sorry— I didn’t mean it—”

“Yes you did.”

“Not really.”

“You meant it,” Purpled snapped,

“You’re not that bad.”

Purpled didn’t bother with a response. Instead he crossed his arms and glared out at the skyline, it looked rather pretty. But he wasn’t going to say that, because he was fucking pissed.

Maybe he’d never talk to Tommy again—

Okay that was a lie.

But still.

He didn't need to know that.

"So," Tommy drawled, "I met these people."

Purpled just looked at him.

"Okay?"

"And... I wanna befriend them, I wanna be their friends. But they're terrified that I'm gonna... I don't even know. Like legally I live by myself, there are no adults around, like I have the room—"

"You have a one bedroom apartment," Purpled deadpanned.

"Better than the streets," Tommy muttered. "They're from the fighting rings... I think. One of them is out of it half the time, and the other one is trying to strangle me with his bare hands everytime we see each other."

"How often is that?"

"They live in the alley."

Purpled groaned, "Just give 'em food, like stray animals."

“Huh?” Tommy muttered, “You can’t just compare two traumatised children to stray animals —”

“Just did.”

“Purpled!” Tommy laughed, shaking his head, “Come on man, you gotta actually help me here. They’re super cool— and I just wanna help out, let them get back on their feet and then — they can go.”

Purpled rolled his eyes. “You’re attached.”

Tommy went quiet.

That said everything.

“Tommy!”

“Purpled!”

“Don’t get attached,” Purpled muttered. “They’ll— leave you out in the rain. Okay? What happens when they find out you’re a vigilante, or lying about your age or— literally anything. Will they handle it?”

“It’s not forever!” Tommy argued, “Just while they get back on their feet. Just a warm place for them to stay, some actual food? They’re young.”

“So are we?”

Tommy sighed, “Purpled come on, you gotta know what it’s like—”

“I do.”

“Then you understand why it’s important.”

Purpled huffed, “They’ll betray you... leave you out in the rain, tell your secrets and never talk to you again. Is that what you want Tommy?”

Tommy looked at Purpled, there was something in his eyes that Purpled had never seen before. Not in Tommy’s eyes at least. Some sort of... anger, some sort of loneliness.

Purpled had to break eye contact.

“Do you want to be alone forever?” Tommy challenged.

Purpled blinked a few times. “Yeah...” he muttered, “I think... I do.”

Tommy stood up, wrinkling up his nose. “I’m going home.”

“Okay.”

---

Tommy sighed, standing up. “Come on man. Let’s go home.”

“Yeah...” Purpled muttered. Standing up slowly. There was still a lot to say. There would always be a lifetime of stuff to say. There was still a safe under Tommy’s bed that no one was allowed to touch. (It was his.)

He was still terrified that his money would run out.

He was still taking jobs...

He was still avoiding Kero, despite everything they had done for him. It was exhausting. Purpled had... so much to hide, and so much to lose.

He ignored the lump in his throat. Nodding and standing up. He looked at Tommy. Sighing again. Feeling both so much brighter and so much heavier, like he'd said everything about everything.

But nothing about things that really mattered. About how his hands had started shaking whenever he held a gun. Not enough to throw off his aim, but enough that he knew his aim wasn't perfect.

About his powers. About... a lot.

He had time.

He had people who cared.

He had secrets... but that was okay. He was allowed those secrets.

Purpled stood up, squaring his shoulders and looking at Tommy with a slight smile. "Yeah. Let's go home."

I am very proud of that ending fyi, the parallel of Purpled & Tommy talking about being alone, and then it transitioning to Tommy and Purpled together, going home. Like... that's the good shit. I'm also proud of how I wrote Purpled much differently in the "flashback" bits, like you can tell that he's grown as a human. There's like two more scenes I wanted to add but...

nah.

Discord link... mayhaps?

[Boom Discord](#)

# family

## Chapter Summary

family.

aka. purpled figures out that maybeeee he doesn't have to figure out everything alone, and he learns that people do care.

## Chapter Notes

hi.

i am aware it's been uhhhh... 10 months.  
stfu.

ENJOY!

### **Warnings:**

violence, guns, knives, injuries

I speedran about 10k words in 5 hours so I could get this done. So... it is done. I am done and now I need to rest.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Purpled was someone not used to fitting in, it was kinda part of his whole gig. He wasn't supposed to fit in unless he wanted to, it was always a bit hard when being trained to be a child assassin, that threw a couple of spanners in the works.

He also wasn't really used to having this whole— home thing, accepting that people will stay. Tommy was perhaps the first who got to know him well enough who stayed for a while, and it hadn't even been that long.

So it was odd, realising that... there were more important people in his life than Tommy. Almost jarring, honestly, he just... hadn't considered the possibility that would happen.

Yet here he was.

Purpled did not know when *Quackity* became an important figure in his life. It was a fucking scam, that's what it was. He came to the tower to... look through some records, to try to gain some extra cash and mess with the AI's code. He was here to check up on Tommy and make life slightly easier for himself.

Instead... he was now friends with Fundy, Quackity, Foolish and Sam.

Well... friends were a strong word.

Just because he once spent time out of work with Fundy, where Fundy and him threw darts at a dart board and Fundy got *so* offended that Purpled won. Despite Purpled's super accuracy. That didn't mean they were friends.

Just because Quackity and him played cards in their lunch breaks, and Purpled would win with little to no hesitation. It didn't mean shit... it was just... a thing that he could do now. He'd win at uno and piss off Quackity.

Just because he spent days in the workshop with Sam, meant nothing. He was just interested in tech, he was just interested in being able to keep up with what Tubbo had to say. Okay? He didn't *like* spending time with Sam, Sam was just a top hero and valuable and Purpled was a bodyguard.

And the days where Quackity wasn't there... he had to look after Sam, Sam was old. He was susceptible to an attack, he was old and weak and Purpled would have *so much paperwork* to do if Sam actually died.

“You’re attached,” Tommy said one morning, when they were both on break, and Purpled just looked flatly at Tommy. Before scowling and shaking his head. He bit into his chicken roll and Tommy rolled his eyes. “You are. You have a social life now... like when did that happen?”

“It’s not a social life.”

“You went out to dinner yesterday? With Puffy and Quackity?”

“Yeah...”

“And the day before that you went with Quackity, Fundy and Wilbur. I wasn’t even invited.”

“What’s that supposed to mean?”

Tommy rolled his eyes, “Nothing, idiot.”

“I just— y’know,” Purpled mumbled.

Tommy just grinned. “Okay *Daniel*. ”

Purpled looked down at his hands. “I’m not attached.”

Without saying a word, Tommy just pat Purpled on the head and stood up. Purpled frowned at his friend as he walked off.

He wasn’t attached... right? He just needed Tommy, Tubbo and Ranboo. He didn’t need Quackity or Sam or Puffy or Fundy or anyone else, the more connections he had the more likely it was that he was going to get hurt.

Purpled glanced out the window.

It was raining.

With a deep breath, Purpled turned around, going back to where ever the fuck Quackity was. He wasn't attached— really, he wasn't.

And the little voice in the back of his head called him a liar.

Purpled knew the little voice was right, but he didn't exactly *like* that idea.

So instead he found Quackity, with Sapnap, as he normally was, and Quackity was loudly talking about ducks while Sapnap ate his lunch.

And sure— when Quackity made the shittiest joke in the world Purpled laughed and sighed as he panned off all of his paperwork to Purpled, and Purpled didn't mind because Quackity had a shitty patrol.

He wasn't *attached*.

---

If Purpled *was* attached (which he wasn't.) Then perhaps— some of the softness he gave people in his actions would make sense. But luckily for them, and also him, he wasn't fucking attached.

Sure. He stopped Fundy from electrocuting himself.

“Fundy!” Purpled yelled, “What the fuck are you doing?”

It was a rather odd situation, Purpled had seen ones like this before but not really from Fundy. Fundy was perched on one of the hospital beds, reaching up to a hole in the ceiling that had a wire hanging out of it.

Like a child being caught, Fundy paused, looking down at Purpled where he shot him a wide smile. Purpled screwed up his face and raised an eyebrow. Arms crossed, and he felt like a parent— except for the fact that he was younger than Quackity.

“Well—” Fundy said, “I need a wire to improve my hearing aid.”

“So... you were going to rip it out of the electrical system of the hospital?” Purpled said slowly, his tone sounded like that one tone Techno got when he was trying to deal with literally anyone younger than him. “Why the— everloving fuck were you trying to rip it out of the wall?”

“Closest place to get it...” Fundy said slowly.

“You would get electrocuted.”

That seemed to fire a synapse in Fundy’s brain because he nodded thoughtfully, looking at the hole in the ceiling again. Pausing a few times before squinting again. “I’ll get Foolish, he can’t get electrocuted.”

“What the fuck?” Purpled shrieked. “Get down from there!”

Fundy rolled his eyes and got down from there.

“You’re still in hospital, idiot,” Purpled said, “Your insides are still putting themselves together, just because you’re in a chill hospital doesn’t mean it’s not a hospital. Let the

doctors handle your hearing aid.”

Fundy frowned.

“And stop trying to break the hospital,” Purpled snapped, “Anyway, Quackity and Wilbur wanted me to give you these.” He plopped the bag onto the bed that Fundy was begrudgingly sitting on. “I think it’s a bunch of Lego?”

Fundy’s face lit up and he scrambled towards the bag.

Sure enough, it was lots and lots of Lego.

And if Purpled had gotten some to add to the mass amounts that Quackity and Wilbur had already gotten him, well then no one would know that, no one would have to know that. Purpled was good with Fundy never knowing.

“Woah!” Fundy muttered.

“Wilbur’s coming over after he showers— and Quackity will probably show up in the next hour or so, I think he’s bringing Sappap too. Dream might tag along, bring some black forest cake to piss off Quackity.”

And if Purpled’s smile softened— no it fucking didn’t.

He wasn’t *attached* even if he stayed to help Fundy with the Lego until someone else showed up. Or if he ordered them both pizza because Fundy was going mad because of the hospital food.

Nah, he wasn’t attached.

Nor was he attached to Foolish.

Foolish was more of the quiet type out of the weird little group they'd formed themselves. He also had the most friends out of all of them, he was constantly visiting people and talking on the phone and often couldn't make it to plans because he had other plans, mans was popular as fuck.

Was the only way Purpled could think to word it, Foolish was popular and everyone loved him.

Purpled also adored him, but he wasn't fucking attached to him. Not emotionally or any other way, Foolish was just... sometimes side-splittingly funny and super intelligent about the weirdest things, and couldn't put a door back on his cupboard. It was— frankly it was amazing.

So were they friends?

Maybe.

Was Purpled *overly* emotionally attached?

Also no.

No matter what Sam said.

It was a quiet day, Purpled was sitting on top of a bookshelf, a pretty solid one too. Legs crossed underneath him, and reading a book. Foolish was... doing Foolish things, in both senses of the word, the proper noun and the adjective.

Quackity had said '*go hang out with Foolish*' and now Purpled was hanging out with Foolish, existing in each other's space rather than talking, because talking was a bad idea which

Purpled hated.

Ugh.

Small talk.

And— Purpled may have been a little bit jumpier than usual after a bad night of rest. Sure—that was why.

There was a resounding bang from downstairs.

Purpled didn't have much bodyguard training, but the little training he did have told him that he had to keep the person as safe as possible, and so Purpled had full intentions of doing that.

He jumped at Foolish, knocking them both to the ground and dragged him behind a piece of furniture. One that you couldn't see behind if you were at the door.

With little hesitation he pulled out his pistol and peeked over the edge of the couch, gun pointed at the door.

Another moment of silence and Purpled listened for— well anything.

“Henry?” Purpled said, heart beating in his throat.

“No need to worry, Daniel,” Henry somehow sounded sincere for once. Which was dumb because Henry was an AI with a smooth British accent. “That was just an explosion from the lab floors, no one is injured.”

Purpled felt like he could breathe again. “Thank fuck,” he sighed with relief, turning around to apologise to Foolish for knocking him to the ground and then dragging him behind a couch.

“Aww,” Foolish said, “You do care.”

“Huh?”

“You were gonna keep me safe,” Foolish grinned, “Purpled that’s nice of you—”

“It’s my job.”

“You will find,” Henry added, ever the nosy motherfucker, “That Purpled has done things like this before, and he was far more nervous this time around. His moments were more desperate, so yes, it does appear he cares about you.”

Purpled glared up at the ceiling, “You’re the fucking worst.”

“You made me like this,” Henry replied then paused, “As I am an AI who learns off of other people’s behaviour, I learn off people who interact with me frequently. Such as yourself and Thomas.”

Purpled glared a bit more, before looking at Foolish was grinning.

“I hate it here.”

It was a lie and they both knew it.

So no, he certainly was not attached to Foolish, he was very funny and smart and while he had not as much patience there was something almost kind about him, that Purpled couldn’t

put his finger on.

Anyways. Wasn't attached to Foolish, not at all and there was nothing that said otherwise.

And he *certainly* was not attached to Sam.

Sam, Awesamdude— one of the original heroes and a fucker.

Purpled wasn't attached. Really.

“Sam!” Purpled called, walking into the workshop like he normally did, he kicked something probably important out of the way and it skidded across the metal floor with an ugly noise. Most of the lights were off, apart from the small ones that lined the gap between the floor and wall, those ones were always on.

Purpled paused, holding the doughnuts against his side as he fumbled for the light switch.

Eventually he found it, and the flood lights turned on, Purpled squinted slightly— he had no idea why they insisted on the lab floors to be so... so fucking bright. They reflected off the floor and straight into Purpled's retinas.

“Sam?” He called out again, “Oi, Henry, where's Sam?”

“Now, Daniel—” Henry said, ever the sassy motherfucker, “I am not simply something you can command whenever you need me.”

“That is genuinely what you are,” Purpled pushed some things off one of the work benches which clattered to the ground and put the doughnuts and coffee cup onto it.

A moment of seemingly offended silence from the AI machine.

Purpled saw a lump in the far distance of the workshop. It was a Sam-coloured lump too, vaguely green and slumped over something. Fear rose in Purpled's throat and he basically sprinted down the distance of the room, knocking at least two things over as he ran.

He reached Sam's side, "Sam? Please don't be dead— please don't—"

A loud snore interrupted him.

Oh.

He was sleeping.

Not dead.

Purpled squinted for a moment, looking at Sam who for once in his life almost allowed himself to look peaceful he snored obnoxiously and Purpled almost found himself laughing. He rolled his eyes before looking around.

He should probably find a pillow or something, and so he did, he found a pillow and a blanket.

With all of his sneaky assassin skills that he had, which were many, he managed to sneak around before reaching Sam again. He threw a blanket around his shoulders, slightly haphazardly. But it was rather cold in here.

Sam was kinda... sleeping on his arms, so Purpled's plan of action surely had to be to lift up Sam's head and just... dump the pillow on top of his arms. He moved slightly closer to Sam.

Holding the pillow in one hand, he managed to grab Sam by the shoulder, not tightly and pull him backwards a moment, his head and entire body tilted up and Purpled dropped the pillow down over his arms.

Then he let go of Sam and he flopped back down onto the pillow.

Purpled, content with his work returned back towards where he left the coffee and doughnut and he found a sticky-note and a pen.

*Go to sleep at a normal time old man, the coffee was hot but you can... figure out how to heat it up or something*

1. *Stop being old.*

Purpled nodded at his intelligent message before sticking it to the front of the coffee cup and putting all of the doughnuts and coffee next to him. Not directly next to him, but he'd figure it out and not knock it over.

Mostly out of curiosity Purpled glanced down at the plan that Sam had, most of it was a bunch of angles and measurements that Purpled didn't really understand, couldn't really be fucked to understand. Most of it was covered up by the pillow anyway, but the little bit he did see looked like handcuffs. Which was— odd.

Purpled moved Sam to the side a little, it looked like— some sort of power suppressing thing. Probably just a prototype or something he was trying to figure out. He paid little mind to it, before walking back towards the door.

So no, Purpled was not attached to *Sam* thank you very much.

Sam was a... dickhead. He was smart and patient when Purpled wanted to learn and was really good at go fish— which was partially a luck game so Purpled had no idea how he did it.

Nah, he wasn't attached to Sam.

And hey. Maybe he'd relent a little, maybe he was a little bit attached to Quackity.

Not *a lot* though, Quackity was just... well a dude. Just a normal dude, and sure he was determined and funny and ambitious and also side-splittingly funny like literally half of his friends— why were his friends this funny?

And sure— maybe Quackity reminded him of Punz a *little* before things went bad and Punz got mean. They both liked to tell a good story and just had a way about them that Purpled couldn't describe. They would both stand up rather straight, they both would talk with their hands more than they had to.

Sure, they weren't the same.

But there was enough familiarity there that Purpled felt... at ease while around Quackity, he couldn't really explain why.

And something he *did* know about Quackity from following him around was that Quackity tended to be a rather nervous person. He always assumed everyone didn't like him despite the aura of fake confidence put on.

Something Purpled also knew is that Quackity would spend days pacing up and down the hallway and Purpled would sit at the end of the hallway and watch him, sometimes he'd help calm down Quackity, sometimes he wouldn't.

This was a little bit different though.

Purpled rolled up at work, not being late once, bumping Tommy in the shoulder as they both walked in.

“I’m just saying,” Tommy said, “Like I reckon I could eat a sandwich in one bite.”

“Well you can squish the sandwich down,” Purpled argued, “So of course you could.”

“No, but like even without rolling it into a ball.”

“I wouldn’t roll it into a ball,” Tommy argued, “I’d just stuff it into my gob.”

They stepped into the elevator and Purpled hit floor 69 for Tommy, and floor 36 for himself. He sighed and leant against the wall of the elevator, just giving Tommy a look.

“Dude.”

“I totally could.”

“But why would you want to?” Purpled challenged, “It’s going to taste way worse, the point of a good sandwich is that it seperates. Like you’re not going to combine all your pasta together and just— fuckin’ eat it as a ball.”

“Why not?”

“You wanna enjoy the taste,” Purpled glanced down at his phone, he wasn’t late— yet. “If you need to eat quickly, then sure— but you are literally not busy enough to fuckin’ need to do that.”

“I am an extremely busy man, that’s why they pay me the big bucks.”

“They should pay you more.”

“They already pay me like a hundred grand a year, Pur— Daniel, Henry delete that.”

“Can do,” Henry replied.

“Yeah and you’ve saved them literal millions of dollars in losses,” Purpled glanced at the little number saying what floor they were currently on, 19, fucking hell this elevator was slow as shit. “I think you should really ask about a raise— or one time bonus or something because you’ve really like... earned it?”

“They pay me way too much,” Tommy crossed his arms, “My job is to basically hang out with my friends—”

“And organise interviews, and appearances, and charity dinners—”

Both of them pause at that.

“On top of the social media management and the videos you do, and the fact that you do videos for the rest of the tower’s heroes. You’re literally working on one for each of the heroes right now, like— that in itself could earn you a raise or promotion.”

Tommy sighed, rolling his eyes. “Just let me go back to my sandwiches, man.”

“You could not eat an entire sandwich in one bite!” Purpled threw both of his hands up, “Come on, Tommy— use those two brain cells, I believe in you. You can do this! I have faith in you.”

“You’re the worst. I mean this genuinely.”

The elevator dinged and Purpled stepped out, on the right floor and everything. “Knocking off at five?”

“Uh— should be, I’ll text you if it’s different.”

“See ya tonight— unless I see you before then,” Purpled gave an awkward wave and Tommy laughed, giving one back.

Purpled turned around and walked into the main area of this floor. This floor was the one that Quackity, Sam and Puffy shared. Which was interesting because he knew *way* too much about how much Puffy disliked the heroes.

He dumped his bag on one of the couches, unlike the SBI floor, these couches and areas were actually allowed to have a personality. Rather than the clean counters, crisp lines and modern design of their floor.

This section was way more homey, with couches that looked like they didn’t belong in this century and a wooden panelling thing on the floor that was stuck over the tile that was in this room.

Lots of the floor was covered in rather old looking rugs, and most of them had shit everywhere. Puffy’s hat was often on the coffee table, or Quackity’s knives were in a neat little pile on one of the end tables.

They also had a kitchen area, and that was where Purpled saw Quackity. Again, unlike the SBI floor they didn’t have an island counter given to them. So Sam made one, installed a sink and everything.

Quackity was sitting at the horribly mismatched island counter, the one made out of the wrong material and no one had ever bothered to change it. So instead they were left with this ugly ass bench.

Purpled took a few steps towards Quackity, planning on telling him about Floof patrolling the foyer again, and Techno allegedly training Floof to attack anyone wearing a beanie.

Instead, Purpled noticed Quackity was crying.

Oh.

He was— okay. Purpled didn't... really know how to deal with this? This was far beyond his pay grade, but Quackity looked genuinely devastated he hadn't even noticed Purpled entering the room and Purpled had been loud on purpose.

Both of his hands were over his face, and he was crying— hard too. He was trying to be quiet, Purpled knew that from experience.

“Quackity?”

Quackity jumped like he'd been electrocuted and he turned to look at Purpled. He wiped at his eyes furiously but that wouldn't remove the red on his face or the tear tracks he clearly had.

“Hey, man,” Quackity's voice sounds strained, which was a kinder word for it. He sounded like he'd had his heart broken or something. “You need anything?”

“What happened?” Purpled sat on the bar stool next to Quackity, and Quackity turned so he was facing forwards again, refusing to make eye contact with Purpled. “You seem... pretty upset.”

Yeah.

Look at him go.

Being all comforting and shit. He was just such a good person.

“Relationships are hard,” Quackity muttered, “All of them, friends, family, co-workers, romantic relationships. They’re just all fuckin’ so difficult to navigate.” He pressed the heel of his hands into his eyes like that would make anything stop. “And— I got in a fight... with someone who matters to me a lot.”

“What about?”

“I don’t even fucking remember,” Quackity muttered through tears. “Something dumb— like the dishes, and then it escalated and I yelled things I didn’t mean and so did he and— it’s so fucking dumb.”

“Maybe,” Purpled said absent-mindedly, trying to think of the best way to navigate whatever this conversation is. What the fuck did Purpled know about friendships— or literally anything. He was a child assassin taught to never gain attachments, he’d ignored that, of course, but his point still stood. “People fight over dumb things all the time, that doesn’t mean they hate you, it just means... you haven’t found a way to work it out together.”

Quackity looked up from where his eyes were fixed on the bench and glanced at Purpled. “Huh?”

“Well... in my opinion,” Purpled said, “If two people care about each other— and want to keep caring about each other they’ll figure it out. Every time, they’ll compromise or— whatever needs to happen. As long as you keep caring, and they keep caring it will work out.”

Quackity burst into tears again, and Purpled had *no* clue what to fucking do, so instead he pat Quackity’s back awkwardly, he seemed to appreciate it a little because he didn’t yell at Purpled.

After a minute or so of a good cry, Quackity looked up again. “I don’t want him to meet my family.”

Okay...

Odd.

“Huh?”

“He—” Quackity ran his hand down his face, “My family knows him as my friend, which he is, he is my friend but he wants to... I dunno I guess tell them that we’re—” another awkward pause and Quackity gave a small smile. “Like a thing— I guess, and— I dunno. They’ll accept me, I know that... I guess I just... we’ve kept it a secret for so long it feels wrong.”

Oh great.

Purpled was unsure of what to do here on multiple fronts.

Amazing.

Okay, he could figure this out, he wasn’t fucking dumb.

“Tell him that,” Purpled said, “Tell him why you’re scared. Be honest with him.”

Quackity just looked at him, and Purpled pointedly avoided eye contact, he did not want to see whatever Quackity was seeing in that head of his.

“I don’t want to,” Quackity mumbled.

“Look,” Purpled said, “He cares about you, right?”

“Yeah.”

“Well then, you’ll work this out. And yeah— it might feel like the end of the world right now, but you can talk this out. You can figure this out, at the end of the day all you can do is be open and honest with each other.”

“When did you get so smart, kid?”

“Dunno,” Purpled grinned, “Why are you being so dumb, old man?”

Quackity gave him a deadpan expression and Purpled just beamed at him.

He wiped away more of his tears.

“This is so fuckin’ dumb— I don’t even remember what the argument was about. I was just scared and—”

“And it’s okay to be scared,” Purpled said, fully intending not to take his own advice, because who would he be if he did that? “But... I think you need to talk to him, you can’t cry forever.”

Quackity frowned and slumped onto the counter. “I can fuckin’ try.”

“Guess you can,” Purpled stood up. Before glancing at Quackity again, he sat back down almost straight away. “Tell me about him... and we can both pretend I am not wildly uncomfortable about hearing whatever your boyfriend is like.”

Quackity gave him a look. “He’s just— himself, and that’s enough, that’s what I want. I want... him to be himself.”

“Oh thank fuck,” Purpled sighed, “I did not want to hear you waxing poetics about his hair or his smile or something— that would’ve taken several years off of my lifespan. Or talk about how he gets you your favourite flowers or something.”

Quackity just smiled, “He does get me irises.”

“I’m going to kill you.”

Quackity laughed at that, the first not negative emotion Purpled had seen out of him this entire conversation. “Wait until you hear about long walks on the beach and... whatever else romantic people do.”

“I hate you, I hate you, I hate you—”

“I’m kidding, he doesn’t like the beach. He keeps trying to fight the crabs.”

Purpled snorted at that. “Does he win?”

“Nope.” Quackity said with a fond smile, “He gets his ass beat by a crab every time. It’s amazing. I didn’t even know a crab would win in a fight, yet here it is, climbing up his leg as he shrieks.”

Purpled laughed again. “He sounds like— an utter idiot.”

“Yeah,” Quackity sighed, but it sounded incredibly fond. Which was disgusting. “He’s so fuckin’ stupid.”

Purpled smiled, standing up, for real this time. He had work to do, and Quackity had a boyfriend to talk to.

“Talk to him,” Purpled said, “You’ve both cooled off, had time to think about it. Talk to him about it. Communication and all that.”

Quackity nodded, there was something more determined in his eyes, which were still slightly bloodshot from the sheer amount of crying he had been doing. But he seemed more sure of himself, he wasn’t curling up on himself anymore, like he was trying to take up the least amount of space possible.

“Do I know him?” Purpled asked.

“Yeah.”

Purpled nodded.

“Daniel,” Quackity said and Purpled looked back at him again. “Thank you, just— for everything you do. For a lot of people, I don’t think Tommy would be the same person without you, I don’t think I’d be the same person. Fundy would be... more Fundy-ish and... you’re a good kid.”

“You’re not even that much older than me.” Well, if they were going off of Daniel Greyson’s age, that was true.

Quackity seemed to consider that, “Nah, you’ll always be the kid to me. You’re a good person.”

Purpled smiled at that, just a small sorta smile, one that someone who knew him worse would miss, but Quackity knew Purpled rather well, so he saw it and smiled a little bit brighter.

“I know,” Purpled deadpanned. “I am the greatest.”

And he walked off, to go and bother the guards on shift.

Behind him Quackity cackled.

Purpled smiled to himself.

---

See, a problem with living was Tommy was his friends. They were both lovely, and kind to him, and accepted Purpled as one of their own, which is what Purpled was, but they were very nice to him.

Now... you see, Purpled wasn't *scared* of Tubbo.

And he totally wasn't... *intimidated* by Tubbo.

Tubbo was short, and had innocent eyes that anyone who knew him for more than a minute knew were as fake as his accent. (Purpled had heard the American accent, fucker was American.)

It was just that... Tubbo was... his equal?

It wasn't like Ranboo and Tommy were less than. It was just that they were slightly oblivious and Purpled could skate around them to the best of his ability. They didn't know much about body language, or faking accents or poisons or—

Anything that Purpled knew about.

*Tubbo*. Tubbo did. In fact he had a sort of calmness about it all... he knew stuff, the same stuff that Purpled knew. They were... too similar for Purpled's liking, both of them were

loud.

Both of them could shut up though, both of them knew body language and accents and voices and fighting and guns and—

They were *so* similar.

“Y’know,” Tubbo said one evening. Tommy was on patrol and Ranboo was at work, leaving both of them. Purpled trying to get better at Mario Kart and Tubbo doing one of the mountains of homework. “I’ve always been kinda scared of you.”

Purpled looked up, screwing up his face. “What does that mean?”

Tubbo sighed, leaning back in his chair. “Like— Boo and Tommy, I love ‘em, but... they’re a little bit dense. Ranboo forgot all his fighting skills, and while Tommy is a skilled fighter—”

“It’s different.”

Tubbo nodded. “It’s different.”

Purpled sighed, pausing the game.

“I mean to say,” Tubbo says, “If you even think about hurting Tommy— or Ranboo I will not hesitate to rip you apart limb from limb. I will do it slowly too, I know how to hurt every nerve in your body and do it slowly.”

“I don’t doubt you can,” Purpled replies.

Tubbo’s quiet. They both are. There isn’t much more to say.

“If you hurt Tommy... the exact same thing applies to you.”

Tubbo nods slowly. “Okay.”

“Okay? That’s all you have to say?”

“Yes. It is.”

Purpled glanced at Tubbo then away again, “Child spy?”

“Child spy,” Tubbo repeated, and his voice shook a little. “I did lots of business espionage as a kid. Some government stuff... Schlatt saved me. You?”

“Assassin, mercenary,” Purpled kept his voice clipped, he didn’t want to get too chummy with Tubbo, not over a topic like this. “I don’t really know, I just know how to hurt people and how to do it well.”

Tubbo managed a smile at him, “Well, that’s the way in L’Manberg, people will get hurt. People will learn how to hurt, I guess it’s the hurt others or the hurt yourself.”

“That’s not healthy,” Purpled said quietly, looking down at his lap. “The world— it isn’t that simple. Nothing is that simple, it’s not a kill or be-killed world— it’s kinder than that.”

Tubbo laughed, there wasn’t much funny about it though, and he looked at Purpled an expression he couldn’t read drawn all across Tubbo’s face. He looked away and let out a small chuckle. “Funny, Ranboo used to say that.”

“Used?”

“Yeah...” Tubbo said darkly. “He had a tail— that was used as a fucking trophy for some sick ring-leader. Changed his mind shortly after that.”

Purpled just looked at him. “The world is— it’s not kind, but it’s not cruel either.”

Tubbo sighed, leaning back in his chair and he gave Purpled a short smile. Not a large thing, just something knowing. “Keep thinking that Purpled, and it is going to get you shot.”

“Sure, people are assholes,” Purpled waved his hand. “But— I guess I learnt you need to have faith in people, or they’ll let you down.”

“Did you have faith in Punz?” Tubbo asked, standing up and Purpled stared at him, mouth open.

“How— how do you— what—”

Tubbo gave him a tight smile, “I’m not stupid, that’s how. Tommy might be too dense to see in front of his own nose sometimes, but you talk about him, not a lot— just enough for me to put some things together. So, answer my question, Purpled, did you have faith in Punz?”

“Yes.”

“How did that go?”

“You know how it went,” Purpled said, “And— for a long time I didn’t trust anyone, or want to trust them. But I’m realising now, that maybe I’d rather live a life being betrayed than one alone, and someone will stay, one day.”

Tubbo raised an eyebrow.

“I mean— you and Tommy, haven’t you two been together since basically the start? Friends, brothers, whatever you call yourself.”

Tubbo looked a bit more upset about that, and Purpled wouldn’t figure out why until much later.

“Yeah,” Tubbo said slowly.

“Well then— you found someone who will stay.”

A few more moments of silent hesitation and Tubbo looked down, “But has Tommy found someone who will stay?”

“Huh?”

“Goodnight, Purpled.”

And he walked off.

Leaving Purpled with more questions than answers, and a feeling of dread in his stomach.

---

Then Tubbo got a firework shot at his face.

Things fell apart around them.

Purpled pretended that he didn't care, he pretended that he didn't think about if he could be the same way. Looking at Tubbo started to feel like a distorted image in a mirror, like the meaner version of Purpled, the one who let himself be hurt and let himself lash out at everyone around him.

The scar caught Purpled's eye whenever they were at home at the same time— it didn't happen often anymore. But it happened enough that Purpled could see the way Tubbo would stare at him.

His expression seemed to say *'keep looking at this fucking ugly scar and understand what happened to me.'* And so— Purpled looked at the scar and tried to understand what happened.

He didn't get it.

And at a certain point, he gave up on getting it.

He gave up on understanding Tubbo, the person that it felt like he could've become. Instead he started looking after Tommy, because no one was, and Purpled couldn't just stand by and watch Tommy tear himself to shreds.

And so— Purpled would stare at Tubbo on the few nights when he was at the apartment, he seemed smaller, more tired, and Purpled would let himself feel bad for Tubbo, but that did not mean he'd sympathise with him or forgive him.

One night, Purpled doesn't remember when. After the scar, and maybe before Tubbo basically moved out with Schlatt.

Ranboo wasn't at home, he was working and Tommy was on patrol... or anything to get him out of the house when Tubbo was at the apartment.

Tubbo looked up at Purpled, something just... so, so sad in his eyes. "Is Tommy alright?" He asked, his voice almost gentle.

Purpled stared at him. "What do you fuckin' think?"

It was like Tubbo had been hit with the way he flinched back, and he didn't let himself feel guilty or upset for Tubbo, despite the pull in his stomach.

"Yeah..." Tubbo said, "That's— that's fair."

Tubbo moves out not too long after that. Not officially, but in every way that really mattered.

Purpled thinks he might be part of the reason.

Maybe Tubbo also got sick of seeing a mirror of himself around every corner.

Or maybe Purpled made Tubbo realise he was hurting Tommy.

And, as painful as it can be, sometimes it's easier to leave then hurt the people you love the most.

---

Purpled thought about Hannah most days. He thought about Walli and Boomer most days as well, he thought about them when he thought he would finally rest, laying in his bed on the floor next to Tommy.

They were his first siblings, for better or for worse. They are the ones who would fight with him playfully and tell him the worst life advice and care for him— and Purpled was the reason they were free much younger.

He expected to never see them again.

Which was why he was rather shocked to see Hannah at a supermarket, both of them reaching for the same box of cereal.

Because Tubbo was... well being Tubbo, and a dickhead. Ranboo was... being a Tubbo apologist, so that meant Purpled had taken it upon himself to do the shopping. Which meant a lot of frozen pizza, but some actual food as well.

And also the cereal—

Only Tommy and Purpled liked this cereal, so it was a perfect power play.

What he was not expecting was... well Hannah staring back at him.

“Hannah?” Purpled whispered, and he knew that it couldn’t be anyone else but her. He still remembered her face, he remembered that she had her hair in two braids most of the time when they were young. The braids were no longer fun, with Hannah having her hair in a half-up half-down situation but she was still— she was still there.

“Prime,” Hannah whispered back, “Purps?”

He nodded, “Yeah— it’s me.”

Hannah stared at him like he was some sort of ghost.

“You’re alive,” Hannah whispered, “Holy fuck you’re alive,” she grabbed Purpled by the shoulders and pulled him in for a hug.

They stayed there a while, before Hannah let go.

“Bastard,” Hannah slapped him in the arm, more playfully than anything. “That’s for not telling me you were... still here. Are you still—” she glanced around, “With... her?”

Purpled shook his head almost frantically. “No— no. We’re. Nah.”

“Punz?”

Purpled’s shoulders hunched up and he shook his head. “Uh— I haven’t seen him in... years,” Purpled laughed, trying to not make it awkward and he inevitably failed. They both knew he probably would. “Are Walli and Boomer here?”

Hannah shook her head, “No, Walli is— he’s in college actually, doing really well and Boomer he’s a— freelance bouncer type guy, security guy. They’re doing... really, really well. How are things for you?”

“Similar gig to Boomer,” Purpled looked down at the ground. “Uh— I— kinda work for the heroes? It’s a long story, I’m not a hero— so don’t worry about that. I just... like guard the doors and shit, sometimes go to events, monitor threats— it pays well.”

Hannah looked at him for a long moment, before nodding. “I’m glad,” she whispered, “Staying out of trouble?”

“Um— wouldn’t go that far,” he said slowly, glancing at one of the magazines on the rack things that they had near the check outs. One of them had Purpled’s face— as a vigilante— plastered on it.

Hannah looked at it and then looked at Purpled, “You’re a—”

“Shhh,” Purpled hissed, “Don’t go yelling about it, I go by Daniel now. Daniel Greyson.”

“Well then, Daniel Greyson,” Hannah said with some sort of proud smile, something familiar but not quite the same. “My name is Hannah Rose, and I am a... community organiser.”

“Why did you hesitate?”

“I didn’t,” she lied.

“Uh— you totally did, I heard it in your voice.”

“I didn’t,” Hannah said, still lying. “I work with disadvantaged youths in Logstedchire. I’m assuming you live there based on the fact you no longer have an Upper accent.”

“I can have an Upper L’Manberg accent if I wanna,” Purpled said, and he meant it. “I just— live in Logstedchire, didn’t even notice I was pickin’ it up.”

“You drop your letters more,” Hannah said, “Your accent is still a mess though, guess they never beat that outta you.”

Purpled nodded, it was a little bit funny, at least. Didn’t make him laugh, but it gave him a sense of... something, he didn’t quite know but it made him happy at least. “Guess so,” Purpled said.

Hannah grinned, “I’m— so glad you’re okay. Do you have... somewhere we can meet later? To— chat.”

“Uh... have an apartment, y’know that block in Logstedchire, it’s near that deli and that prawn factory? I live on the second floor, uh— apartment 2E. My roommate might be there — he might be working late, but he knows everything.”

“Everything?” Hannah repeated.

“Yeah.”

“Holy shit,” Hannah said, “I really thought you’d go die with those secrets— about your training and us and— letting us go and— just the entire thing.”

“He knows,” Purpled replied coolly, “More than you do.”

Hannah flinched back as if she’d been hit.

Purpled found that he didn’t care.

The relief of Hannah being alive quickly became... a bit more bitter, and he couldn’t really explain why. Something more upset. More angry and broken in his voice. He was angry at her— for not coming back. He was angry at her for a lot of things, and yes, it wasn’t fair, yet he was angry either way.

“See ya tonight,” Purpled said, grabbing his shopping cart with the amount of aggression one can grab a shopping cart with and he turned around before walking off in the most dramatic way possible—

He’d spent way too much time with Wilbur.

The subsequent hours of waiting were painful.

They stretched out incredibly long, the minutes felt like hours and the hours felt like days.

Purpled paced up and down almost the entire time, he'd put the groceries away, tidied up the lounge room, done some laundry, folded some more laundry.

He was such a good roommate.

And a very anxious roommate.

That was basically the same thing.

He walked up and down for a bit longer, before trying to calm down and sit on the couch and play on the Switch, and instead he got distracted and got nervous so he started walking around.

There was a knock on the door and Purpled jumped.

He took one moment to himself, with a deep breath before walking to the door in what someone might think was a calmly manner. Someone being himself, he was going to be cool, calm and also collected about this.

Woo.

He could do this!

He opened the door.

A big day, for the Purpled community.

“Hi,” Hannah said. Her hair was in two braids, she had a bag slung over her shoulder and she was wearing all black. “Just came back from the gym sorry— I have no plans on staying,

trust me.”

And so, she basically walked in without being invited, which was fair enough.

She sat down at the dining table, which was a strong word considering they ate on the couch most of the time.

That was Tubbo’s desk.

Then Tubbo had... a fucking Tubbo moment and now he sulked in his bedroom most of the time.

Hannah looked around nodding approvingly, “This is clean.”

“Stress cleaned,” Purpled muttered, “It’s not normally this clean. It’s like... four teenage boys.”

Hannah screwed up her nose.

“Eh it works,” Purpled shrugged.

“So... you’re esteemed vigilante Purpled. Dubbed the protector of children.”

“They still use those titles?” Purpled laughed, “I thought that was just like— a thing back when it was about all I did. I like... beat up armed robbers and stuff now. Uh— yeah still will kick the shit outta an abuser, what else will I do— not petty theft, that’s no fun. Uh— fought Elysium one time. That was fun. At my favourite taco truck as well.”

“You have a favourite taco van?” Hannah asked fondly.

“Yup,” Purpled nodded, “Kero’s Tacos, best in the country— would recommend the spaghetti tacos for sure though.”

“Ew.”

A moment of silence as Purpled considered the words spaghetti and taco in correlation with each other before nodding. It was a reasonable enough reaction to a weird ass combination. Some people just didn’t understand the true beauty of a spaghetti taco.

“So,” Purpled leant against the counter, “What’s your job like?”

“Really good,” Hannah nodded, “Uh— I currently have two children staying with me until we find them a place, but there’s something almost fun about that, y’know? It’s nice to know you’re making a difference, I’m sure you get that.”

“What organisation?” Purpled asked, picking up his phone to Google it. “Some of the charity organisations here are really corrupt, skim off the top— which one.”

Hannah paused.

Purpled raised an eyebrow. “What’s the matter.”

“Uh it’s an American company who have a branch here,” Hannah said with a polite smile, “That’s how I got transfered over.”

Purpled stared at her.

He glanced down at her bag.

She seemed to realise at the same moment because she picked it up to zip it closed.

That didn't stop Purpled from seeing what was actually inside the bag though.

A mask. A black gas mask with a smudge of purple that Purpled knew was the flower that Elysium had become known for.

Hannah worked for Elysium.

That's why she came back. To fucking... work for Elysium.

"Elysium..." Purpled muttered, "You work for—"

"I work with the kids," Hannah put both of her hands out in front of her, in what was probably supposed to be a supportive and non-threatening movement, but Purpled had seen her do more with less. "From the fighting rings, with abusive parents who ran to Elysium in hopes of safety. We don't turn the kids away— we train them, to be competent, to hold their own. They never have to do anything for Elysium— we're not the heroes."

Purpled stared at her. "You fuckin', you come back to L'Manberg to work for a terrorist organisation?"

"I do relief!" Hannah yelled back, "Elysium isn't all... black and white, Purpled, it's more complicated than that. Yes, there's violence but there's also charity programs, homeless shelters, free food— free lunches for kids at school, financial support for parents and their kids. Places for homeless kids, abused kids, whoever needs it, they can go there— and yes there's a side dedicated to violence but there's one dedicated to kindness to. To the things— I never got, the things you never got."

Purpled stared at her, jaw set.

“Don’t you wish there had been a place where we *knew* we were safe?” Hannah asked, “We could’ve left so long ago, when you were like... eight, we could’ve run and all of us would’ve been okay. Punz and you wouldn’t have been left behind, we would’ve been okay.”

“You were the one who left, don’t try— fuckin’ twist this on me!”

“You said to leave.”

“You said you’d come back,” Purpled whispered. “I was... a kid, Hannah. You were... what like... fourteen? You— I trusted you, I wanted to be saved. No one— no one ever came, Punz saved himself. She died because of that... you... left me.”

“Purpled—” Hannah whispered, “It wasn’t that simple, you know it wasn’t that simple—”

“Is that why you work with the kids at Elysium?” Purpled asked, something clicking in his head. It made fucking sense— he hated that it made sense. “You left me— you don’t want to leave another vulnerable kid behind.”

Hannah’s lack of response spoke volumes.

“I’m glad you’re okay,” Purpled stood up, arms crossed. “I’m glad Boomer and Walli are living a normal life. But you got the privilege of coming back, I— I never got the chance to leave. I’ll never be able to leave, Hannah.”

“Purps—”

“I’ll be on the wretched island until the day I die,” Purpled whispered, “You can leave— you fucking did leave. I won’t ever get that, not really— I— that’s not... that’s not fair, I’m the reason you got that freedom!”

“Purpled.”

“I let you guys go! I held off Punz— I almost died because of it. And what the fuck do I have to pay for it? You— I have you standing in front of me looking the happiest you’ve ever been and I fucking hate you for it!”

“I’m sorry,” Hannah whispered, “I’m so sorry, I know that won’t fix it. I know that nothing will ever fix it. I’m so sorry. And so thankful, what you did when you were a kid was really brave, and noble and I’ve respected you forever because of it. I wouldn’t have done it.”

Purpled didn’t say anything.

Hannah just looked at him, “Thank you,” Hannah whispered, “For giving us a chance you didn’t give yourself.”

“Punz works for Elysium,” Purpled blurted out.

“Huh?” Hannah said.

“You didn’t— know?” Purpled said, “He... set off the bomb at the gala, I think— I’m not sure but I think he has to work for Elysium... it doesn’t make sense otherwise. He might just be a contracted person but, there’s some sort of tie there.”

“I... I haven’t seen Punz,” Hannah said, “I didn’t know, I promise you that Purpled. I didn’t know.”

Purpled didn’t believe her.

“Liar.” He hissed.

“I’m not,” Hannah shook her head, “Purpled, I promise you, this is the first I’m hearing of it. I didn’t know. I don’t know— I thought he was... I don’t even know, I’ll look into it, I promise.”

“Okay,” Purpled sighed, closing his eyes. “Get out now.”

“Pardon?”

“I don’t want you here,” Purpled spat. “Alright? I don’t fucking want you here— I’m not certain if I ever want to see you again. So get out, and don’t fucking come back.”

Hannah just looked at him, something sad on her face.

“If you ever cared about me,” Purpled said, “Then get the fuck out, stay the fuck outta my life.”

“Purpled— that’s not fair—”

“Neither is life!” Purpled yelled, “Neither was letting you three escape, neither was Punz leaving me— nothing’s fair. I need you gone. Get the fuck out right now.”

“Okay,” Hannah said gently. “Okay, I hear you. I need you to know— I know you don’t want to, but if you need it Elysium is open for you. And anyone else you know who needs it, we will keep you safe with everything we have. I swear it.”

“Out.” Purpled pointed towards the door.

Hannah took the not-so subtle hint and left.

Purpled stared at the door for a few seconds, the way it didn't quite swing shut. And for some reason Purpled wanted her to come back, he wanted her to... have forgotten something behind here.

But she didn't.

Hannah was smarter than that.

Purpled needed the space, and he wished he didn't.

He'd missed Hannah.

Seeing her just— reminded him of the flaws, the things that weren't perfect. That he'd been hurt by her whether she meant to or not. It was probably cruel to be that aggressive to one of the only people who had probably ever cared.

But... he didn't know.

His brain didn't make sense a lot of the time.

Hannah left.

Purpled thought he'd forgiven her a long time ago.

He hadn't.

---

The next day Purpled's mood had not improved much.

That was why he was *a bit fucking pissed* that he was currently surrounded by some sort of weapons dealers— which Purpled wasn't even trying to bust, he was trying to get to the assault happening a few blocks over.

He didn't give a shit about the weapons deals— they had to make their money. He cared about the targeted crimes.

Thankfully Tommy had gone to handle that, which meant Purpled was left here... standing... and surrounded by several guns. And various other sharp looking things that looked painful — which honestly, was not something he really wanted to deal with.

Shockingly enough, Purpled did not really enjoy being stabbed.

He hated blood and he hated seeing his own blood— although there were a couple funny stories behind that.

“Can we not?” Purpled deadpanned, his voice modulator kicking in. “Please? I’ve known this deal was happening for literal days— it’s not drugs, it’s only weapons and I really don’t want to fight all of you.”

Some curious looks were directed at him and Purpled only wanted to rip out his hair a little bit more! Which was a major improvement for him, for fucking sure.

“Like— I don’t give a shit,” Purpled said, “Make your money however you want— like I don’t fucking get paid enough for this, I’m not Theseus who wants to fix every problem, I would like to fix the violent crimes and the drug related shit.”

“That’s pretty respectable,” one of them said and they got slapped in the arm.

“Now,” one of them said, and judging by the fucking smugness in her voice, Purpled assumed she was the leader. He didn’t turn to look at her as she circled around him slowly. Her hair was bright green... which seemed like a choice, but whatever. “Purpled... one of The Logstedchire Four.”

“That’s me!”

“How much do you reckon the heroes would pay for your capture?”

“Oh, excellent question Jan—”

“My name isn’t Jan.”

“See that honestly depends on a couple of things, right now I’m not a high priority because Theseus, Nihachu and I have laid pretty well— Slime has laid *extremely* low. Honestly you threaten to throw a guy into lava like... one time and suddenly he retires.”

That wasn’t the truth, Purpled didn’t threaten to throw Slime into *lava* only the ocean, but the media had ran with it and Purpled sure as fuck wasn’t going to kick up a fuss about another reason people wouldn’t want to cosplay him.

“Huh?”

“Like... ten bucks at least,” Purpled looked up.

Where the fuck was Thomas Underscore—

Carmen San Diego and Thomas Underscore, the two great mysteries of the fucking world.

Purpled sighed, crossing his arms. “Can I just... like go, please?”

“Nope.”

“But like— hear me out, hear me out— hear me out,” Purpled said, “What if you... don’t. A big concept I know. So you fuck off, let me leave and I don’t get all of you arrested for an illegal arms deal selling...” Purpled glanced around. “A mace? Like— come on, just let me walk away.”

“At least a couple million,” someone else piped up and Purpled audibly groaned, looking up at the roof and praying that someone would end his suffering. But no. Purpled didn’t— get nice things, he only got to be surrounded by fucking idiots.

He listened as they argued how much his capture would be worth.

There was a noise above them.

Purpled glanced up.

Tommy was crouched on one of the rafters, breathing a bit heavier than normal and he looked down at Purpled. “*They’re still talking?*” He signed, glancing around. “*Are you a good staller or are they incompetent.*”

“*Both.*” Purpled signed back, before looking back straight ahead in case anyone caught him looking up. He watched as the leader lady did leader lady things— and whatever else people did.

Purpled was aging rapidly, his brain cells were decaying, his IQ was rapidly dropping.

He needed out.

“Alright,” Purpled clapped his hands again and everyone fell silent. Prime, he was glad he didn’t have to do sign language all the time and could insult the people he was arresting. “I gave you a warning, and a chance.”

Purpled was the first one to make a move, lashing out at the closest person to him on his left.

Grabbing their arm and twisting it in a way that could not have been comfortable. Something cracked and Purpled kicked the back of one of their knees and they toppled to the ground.

“You and what army?” Someone called.

“Uh— I have Theseus?” Purpled called back, “Is that like— enough for you. I can’t pull Nihachu and Slimecicle out of my pocket, sorry—”

“Theseus?”

And someone was lifted up by red energy, Tommy jumped off the rafter. Where he kicked the person he threw up by energy, and only broke their fall slightly as he landed on the ground.

Tommy looked up, and Purpled knew the look in his eyes even without seeing them. Something determined and just... sheer joy, unfiltered joy. It seemed like one of the only times Tommy really let himself be happy.

He loved being Theseus, he loved the confidence and the power and he loved being able to... just be. If Purpled didn’t know better, he’d say Theseus was something he loved the most. But he did know Tommy better, and Tommy loved other people too much to love Theseus more.

Purpled grinned, grabbing the gun strapped to his leg and firing three shots at three people approaching him.

One got them in the hand, going through and... hitting a wall or something. Another one got a graze across the cheek and the other got a bullet in the foot.

He hit the floor as three shots rang out above him and bullets embedded themselves into the wall behind them, Purpled just grinned, even though they couldn't see it.

There was something freeing about being able to beat the shit out of people behind a mask, something that said Purpled didn't have to be anything more but himself. He had the literal mask hiding him, he didn't need a metaphorical one too.

"Batters up, Theseus!" Purpled yells, jumping and kicking someone in the chest. They went flying.

Tommy caught them at the last minute, before throwing them into a group of people.

"Strike!" Purpled called out, and he could've sworn he heard Tommy laughing at least a little bit.

Someone ran at Purpled from behind and grabbed him, wrapping their forearm across his throat and pressing. Purpled gave himself a few seconds to panic, before kicking out his legs.

Oh someone straight up had a gun pointed at him as he was being held in spot.

Purpled dropped the gun to the floor, he'd pick that up later, and grabbed his attackers arms with both hands. Using that he took a deep breath, before kicking one of his legs up to gain momentum.

Then he threw all of his weight down and rolled, rolled basically over the top of the person attempting to choke him.

He threw himself at the gun-person, grabbing them by the wrist and point it up into the roof. He pulled the trigger a few times, bullets flying into the ceiling until Purpled heard the familiar click.

Yanking the gun out of the (former) gun-person's hand, he slapped them across the face with it, and they were wise enough to go down after that.

Purpled turned to look at the rest of the people, before throwing the empty gun at one running at him, it bounced satisfyingly and allowed him enough time to pick up his own gun and fire it over their shoulder.

The person running at him yelled, hitting the floor and Purpled walked past. "Stay down," he snarled.

Tommy appeared to... well be having a bit of an issue, it appeared that everyone wanted to fight Theseus a little bit. He was stuck in what seemed like a circle around him and Purpled had little way fighting through that alone.

He looked around. There was a way onto the rafters, he had to shimmy up a column that didn't look safe or sturdy at all and then drop down, basically right next to Tommy and fight back to back.

They didn't have many other options.

Purpled grabbed a length of rope from his belt.

He was going to Mulan this bitch, and Mulan this bitch he did.

He wrapped the rope around the column before starting to scale. He had to kick one person trying to grab his ankle and one time he had to spin around to the other side of the column to avoid a bullet from landing in his leg.

With great difficulty, he got up onto the rafters, where he started running. He fired some shots at the ground haphazardly. They didn't hit, he knew they fucking wouldn't and he was a bit proud of that— not like super proud, but at least a bit.

Sure, one skill was knowing when bullets would hit.

But he was pretty damn good at it.

Purpled watched Tommy look up at him, and Purpled nodded.

He fired a bullet into the shin of someone about to stab Tommy, before throwing himself off the rafer, hoping Tommy would catch him.

Of course, like he did everytime, Tommy caught him with ease.

Setting him on the ground at the right speed that allowed Purpled to get into action straight away. Pressing his back against Tommy's so no one could sneak behind him. They both allowed themselves a moment of stillness.

Then Purpled swung for one of them, he ducked under Tommy doing a roundhouse kick and grabbed one of them by the collar before throwing them onto the floor, causing a couple of people to trip and then Purpled to fire bullets at them.

These guys didn't seem very well trained, hence the reason they flinched away from bullets. Which was something that would be very useful for an escape— which was something Purpled should probably be organising.

Tommy glanced over his shoulder at Purpled.

Somehow Purpled knew to jump up as high as he could.

Tommy slammed his foot on the ground and a wave of energy passed through the floor. Sending multiple people flying in multiple directions. Purpled landed on the ground again, before kicking someone in the chest.

He checked over his shoulder to make sure Tommy was okay, he was, Purpled could see his grin underneath his mask.

Purpled ducked underneath someone trying to punch him, managing to throw them towards Tommy who sent them flying into the air. Like he always did, Tommy caught them last second, before flinging them across the floor so they'd stay away.

They'd gotten through a good portion of the people, some of them were staying down, some of them weren't.

"Oi, Theseus!" Purpled yelled, "Have a finishing move or something?"

Tommy stopped beating the shit out of one guy to just look at Purpled. Holding him mid-air for a moment and just... staring at him.

"Alrightie then," Purpled said.

Because Purpled couldn't only catch W's, he had to catch some L's and this was an L, he got punched across the face and staggered backwards. Holding the side of his jaw and bumping into Tommy.

Tommy seemed to sense there was some sort of problem because he turned around and flung the guy who punched Purpled back.

"Got your back," Tommy murmured, just so Purpled could hear.

“I know,” Purpled replied, and he did.

Purpled recovered from the pain in the side of his jaw and fired three bullets. One went through the meaty part of the thigh, the side of it. It wouldn't hit any arteries, it would just bleed like a bitch. One bullet skidded past the ear of someone, nicking a bit off and they screamed and dove towards the ground. The last bullet fired at someone's arm, it grazed the top of their shoulder... well a bit more than a graze.

But it got out on the other side and that was really what mattered.

Purpled found he was running out of energy and breath, despite being freakishly fit, and he wondered how Tommy was doing— but Tommy didn't really have to like... move as much as Purpled did.

Bastard.

Purpled grabbed the last person running at him by the shoulder. He kinda jumped, so he was behind him, before grabbing their elbow with his other hand and pushing their shoulder down until they crumpled onto the ground.

And crumple they did.

“Stay fuckin' down,” Purpled snapped.

Okay, now was Tommy breathing alright, or was he a little bitch boy who didn't have to physically move a lot while fighting people... little fucking bitch.

He looked over at Tommy.

He expected to see Tommy panting, maybe doubled over after defeating his last enemy and then they'd get out of here. Probably run out of the front door if Purpled was speaking from experience.

Tommy was instead, on the ground.

With his goggles ripped half off his face—

This motherfucker— in like ten seconds managed to get almost unmasked.

The person attempting to unmask him, hit him hard.

Tommy's arms went to protect his face, and Purpled had the feeling that Tommy wasn't quite here in this room anymore. But somewhere much, much worse and that made Purpled terrified for what Tommy might do.

His powers were unreliable when he wasn't scared for his life.

Purpled jumped for the person, wrapping his arms around them as he body tackled them. They both hit the ground and Purpled scrambled for his gun.

Instead he got whacked in the face, Purpled's head jerked backwards from the hit before he managed to gain his balance and point the gun at the forehead of this specific motherfucker.

Purpled looked down at the fear.

Good.

Tommy had gotten onto his feet, his goggles were back on his face completely and he was only shaking slightly.

He looked at Purpled with the gun pointing at the man's forehead.

Tommy shook his head, almost rapidly.

Purpled gave up on this fight, he didn't want to shoot anyone and he didn't want to make Tommy upset or scared of him. He already seemed shaky and nervous, Purpled didn't need to needlessly add to that.

So he stood up, looking at Tommy and he nodded.

"Stay down!" Purpled yelled, "It's not worth it. I gave you my warning, this should be covered because we're vigilantes. So fuckin' be grateful we beat you up rather than a rival of some sort. Got it?"

They appeared to get it.

So they sprinted out of the front door, the way they normally did.

Tommy grabbed Purpled, kind of picking him up and Purpled screamed as they flew into the air.

"Relax!" Tommy yelled at him.

Purpled did not relax and instead clung onto Tommy harder as they flew through the air.

He fucking hated this bit—

Then they landed on the ground and Tommy lost his grip.

Purpled tumbled against the concrete of one of the buildings, feeling the skin on his elbows and knees rip slightly as he skidded. He rolled for a bit before looking at Tommy who had already ripped off his mask and was doubled over wheezing for breath.

This didn't... sound like a panic attack.

It just sounded like he was tired.

"You... like okay?" Purpled asked slowly and Tommy looked up at him.

He did not look great, his nose was bleeding, his lip was split and it looked like he had a shiny black eye forming, although it was too dark and too early to tell. Purpled just assumed.

Tommy flipped him off, "Not a panic attack dickhead," he spat onto the side of the building — which was disgusting and also evidence. "There's so much fuckin' flem in my throat. How the fuck do you— clamber up columns and do *way* more movement than me."

"With great skill," Purpled deadpanned, "I'm used to fighting the way I fight, you've had to adapt way more than me. I'm also like— weirdly fit."

"I'm also fit!" Tommy wheezed, "How do you outclass me in literally every way, you don't even have like... super overpowered powers."

Purpled snorted, shaking his head.

He helped Tommy sit down and he sat down next to him. Tommy leant against him, using Purpled to hold up his bodyweight, for once Purpled didn't say anything and let Tommy stay

there.

“Could sleep here.”

“Nope,” Purpled said, “This is not like last week, do not even try to persuade me.”

“Our apartment is like... fifteen minutes away,” Tommy groaned. “Free bed here.”

“Nah.”

“Please?”

“Nope.”

Tommy groaned, leaning against Purpled a bit more and he sighed, running a hand down his face. Purpled didn't say anything.

Then Purpled came to a startingly, and perhaps terrifying realisation.

He trusted Tommy.

Well— duh.

But while they were fighting, Purpled wasn't scared someone would sneak up behind him. He wasn't scared that someone would grab him and he'd have to get out. He... trusted Tommy, to keep him safe.

The only reason he glanced behind him at all was to make sure Tommy was okay.

And... that was odd.

Purpled was used to having his own back in fights, having to look in all directions to keep himself safe. Sometimes even while fighting with Tommy or Nihachu or Slimecicle before he threatened him. He'd always be checking, making sure he was okay, that no one was behind him and planning to hurt him.

Huh.

That was... odd.

He looked at Tommy who was half passed out next to him, not quite because he was swearing about something under his breath. But he looked rather tired. Purpled smiled fondly.

"Thanks for having my back in there," Purpled said.

"You too," Tommy added, although he sounded a lot more tired. "We work pretty well together."

"You've said that before," Purpled deadpanned.

"You denied it before," Tommy muttered back, which was an excellent point.

"Yeah," Purpled grinned, "I suppose we work *okay* together."

Tommy's grin was everything.

---

However, for every win Purpled got, he got another loss.

It was late at night, when Purpled saw Punz again. For the first time... well in years technically, Purpled saw his... whatever the fuck Punz was to him, at the gala, but they hadn't spoken or interacted at all— in fact Techno had kinda stopped that from happening... which was a wise decision.

It was early in the morning when Purpled's life started to get significantly worse.

First of all it was raining uncontrollably.

Purpled was already drenched from the rain so that was fine, his hoodie was literally dripping and his hair was plastered to the front of his goggles. No matter how much he tried to wipe it off it seemed like the water would just replace it and his hair would stick to his goggles.

“Stupid fuckin’—”

Punz.

Punz was standing there.

Purpled found he could barely breathe, his eyes went wide and he stared directly in front of him, unable to say anything for a long time, letting himself just look ahead, confused and scared— because he was both of those things.

“Purpled,” Punz said, his voice was almost gentle— the same tone he'd use when they were children.

They were not children anymore.

“Why are you here?” Purpled yelled, his voice broke slightly and he forced away any tears that might fall. “Stay the fuck away from me, you made your choice— I made my choice. Fuck off!”

Punz took a few steps towards him and Purpled threw up a hand, taking a few staggering steps backwards before glaring at... whatever Punz was to him now. “Purpled—”

“Fuck off!” Purpled yelled, he stumbled back a bit further. “Stay away from me! I don’t fuckin’ want anythin’ to do with you!”

Punz didn’t say anything for a moment, he didn’t even move, he just looked at Purpled. There was something that was almost judgement in his eyes, and Purpled’s hand jumped to the knife on his belt before he could stop it— even if he could stop the reaction he wouldn’t. He grabbed the knife, pointing it at Punz, he wanted to throw it, he wanted it to hit Punz and he wanted it to *hurt*.

It was raining heavier now, Purpled held his hand up to eyes to try and stop the rain from getting into his eyes. It failed and his hoodie was drenched as the rain bounced around them. “Stay away—” He stumbles backwards again.

Punz almost has the audacity to look upset and Purpled staggers away from him, hands shaking around the knife in his hand.

“Purpled—”

“Stay away from me!” Purpled screamed, mostly drowned out by the rain. “I don’t want you here, you don’t want to be here. I think we can figure this out like mature people and you fucking *leave me alone*. ”

“Just listen to me!” Punz yelled.

Purpled stopped.

It was an involuntary reaction, one of the phrases that him and Punz were basically trained to respond to. Purpled went completely still, he stopped breathing and just stared at his brother standing in front of him.

He barely breathed, just like he was trained.

“Purpled— I’m sorry I didn’t—”

He didn’t move, or speak. At this point he didn’t know if this was to guilt trip Punz or so he could find a bit of revenge in the way he was staring, letting his eyes go blank— halfway between being aware and not.

Punz stepped forwards.

Purpled didn’t move.

He moved again, so he could put his hand on Purpled’s shoulder.

Purpled looked up at him, his grip on the knife tightening.

“Have you heard of Elysium?” Punz asked gently.

Somehow *that* is what snapped Purpled out of his trance, his grip on the knife tightened and he swung it towards Punz. Tragically it didn’t hit, Purpled could only wish for that good of an outcome.

Punz grabbed his arm and twisted it behind his back.

Purpled kicked his foot out, hitting Punz in the knee, and it may have been a credit to his training but his grip on Purpled's arm did not loosen. In fact he twisted it more and more to the point it hurt.

Shit. That might be dislocated.

He was kicked in the back of the knees and he landed on the ground with a thump, turning his face in a way that meant he didn't slam his head against the concrete but the rest of him hit the ground.

Punz held his arm in place.

He rested his head on the concrete, turning his head and wincing at the coldness of the concrete underneath it.

"Alright," Punz said, quieter, "I see you haven't been keeping up with your training."

"Let me go you bastard—"

"Be quiet or I will break your arm and leave you here."

Purpled's mouth clicked shut.

"Okay," Punz sighed, "Let's try this again— do you know Elysium?"

“Yeah,” Purpled snapped, “Tried to kill one of my friends— almost succeeded, threatened several of my friends at that fucking gala—”

“You were there?” Punz said.

“I was there you sick bastard,” Purpled tried to struggle against Punz’s grip and he didn’t succeed, instead his face was pressed into the concrete more, and Purpled could feel the mark already. “I saw you, y’know.”

Punz paused, his grip loosening— not enough for Purpled to do anything with, but maybe it was some sort of hope.

Huh.

Maybe he really had to Tommy this situation and talk himself out of it.

“What?”

“I saw you,” Purpled said, “I know you set off the bomb— I know you’re working for Elysium and I know you’re going to try to recruit me. And what I know, is that I’m not joining.”

“It pays well.”

“It pays well not to be a dickhead who throws all your morals away,” Purpled hissed.

“Most of your friends are heroes.”

“They don’t know better,” Purpled managed between one side of his face being squished against the concrete, it was probably actually quite difficult to understand just about anything he was saying. “Like how I didn’t know better when I was ten.”

“You’ve become stupid,” Punz twisted his arm and Purpled winced. “It’s money, Purpled.”

“I don’t give a shit!” Purpled yelled, “Great— I actually have friends and people I care about!”

Punz laughed, “ *Friends?*” He repeated, “You call those rich bastards who have never had a concern about anyone apart from themselves *your friends*, Purpled— their job will always come first.”

“Sounds like someone I know,” Purpled spat, “I’m not joining your stupid nerd group. You’re named after fuckin’ Greek mythology, you’re all fuckin’ nerds.”

“The money could get you off L’Manberg,” Punz said.

Now *that* made Purpled pause. He would love to pretend that it didn’t that somehow in some universe that wasn’t here he had better morals than that, that he was a better person than that. But... getting off L’Manberg, that wasn’t an easy task.

“Huh?” Purpled said, trying to turn his head to look at Punz but he didn’t manage until his head was pushed back towards the ground. “What do you mean—”

“Fake identity,” Punz said smoothly, “Blood tests that reveal you only have four percent hybrid blood— entire records spanning back years and years. You could get off this island and stay away.”

And Purpled hated that he paused.

He hated that he let himself think about it for a moment, about how *fucking nice that four percent hybrid blood* would be, it would grant him so much— especially out of L'Manberg, it would—

Mean he left Tommy.

Mean he left Quackity and Fundy and Foolish and Sam and whatever he was finding at the hero tower. It meant he wouldn't be able to hear Fundy cussing out Foolish for taking his hearing aid or could hear Quackity talk about some reporter dude for the fifth day in a row.

It meant he left the scars L'Manberg had left on this island.

He could get on a boat, he could travel far away. Go to America— go to fucking Europe, Australia, anywhere— he could go anywhere away from all of *this*.

“No.” Purpled said, he didn't sound convincing, even to himself. “You'll want something from me, won't you? You always want something, you won't let me be happy unless I do something for you.”

Punz went quiet.

So Purpled hit the exact mark then.

“At least hear what I want.”

Purpled went quiet, waiting.

“I want Theseus... gone.”

“Gone?” Purpled shrieked, “You sick motherfucker— I’m not going to kill Theseus— I barely know the guy,” now that part was a complete lie, but Purpled had the feeling he wouldn’t get called out on it. “We work together sometimes!”

All of this hedged on the bet that Punz hadn’t already figured it out and was just trying to taunt him.

Punz twisted his arm more and Purpled winced even more, he swore something popped that wasn’t supposed to pop— okay this was not taunting this was an interrogation. “Tell me the fucking truth.”

“I don’t know him!” Purpled yelled, “He speaks sign language around everyone! Keeps his mask on, he has like light brown hair—” another lie, “That’s all I fucking know!” Purpled tried to fight against Punz’s grip but inevitably failed. “I wouldn’t risk myself like this for another vigilante!”

Punz seemed to think he had a point there.

“Then why are you and Theseus the only two who patrol together?” Punz snapped, “Why haven’t you been seen with Nihachu or Slimecicle—”

“Because Slimecicle has been missing for ages and Nihachu patrols mostly on the Western side of Logstedchire! I don’t fucking know! We just run into each other a lot, we must be on the same police lines and hero tip lines— I don’t fucking know!” He hoped he was being at least a little convincing.

He must have been doing at least *something* right because his arm was not broken— yet— and he was still talking to Punz.

“Tell me what you do know.” Punz snapped.

“He has light brown hair, he’s a bit older than me— uh— he has some fucked powers and he doesn’t have control over all of them—” another twist, “Ow— ow— fucking ow— he— he doesn’t like the fighting rings, he used to be in one, I think!”

Wow. Purpled really was lying like he was about to get an Oscar for this.

That last comment made Punz pause. He let go of Purpled completely, and he took this as a chance to turn over and shuffle backwards, which he did.

Punz stared at him. “He’s a fighting ring kid?”

“Maybe?” Purpled tried to stop his voice from shaking. He started poking about his arm, bending the joints slowly and trying to figure out if anything was broken at all. He didn’t *think* it was. His elbow hurt a lot when he knew it, “He— he fights against them a lot, he hates them— he’s said some stuff that only comes from people who know about the fighting rings, know they exist— and how they operate and—”

Purpled cut himself off.

“That’s all I know.”

“It’s not.”

Purpled looked at him, he didn’t have his knife, but he still had the pistol strapped to his leg. He still had the metal piping around them, he still had a lot of things that Punz didn’t have— he had someone to fight, and a reason to fight them. Fuelled by more than— fucking money.

“What else do you know?” Punz asked.

“He—” Purpled had no clue what he was going to say, but he needed a lie quickly. “He was —” wow, Purpled was really stalling for time here. He wasn’t even doing an overly great job

at it.

“Spit it out.”

“Likes Taylor Swift...” Purpled muttered.

Punz looked at him with wide eyes. “Why the *fuck* would I need to know that?”

“I dunno!” Purpled yelled in his defence, “I don’t know why you need to know any of this.”

Punz laughed.

The rain still bucketed down around them, and they had both stopped caring about the rain a long time ago. Purpled’s hair was hanging in his face in strands that had sort of clumped together from the rain. It wasn’t the most comfortable thing in the world.

Punz— the man who Purpled had once called his brother, squatted down in front of him. A fair enough distance away, so that Purpled didn’t grab his gun and send several bullets into his torso.

He smiled, something twisted about it, wrong— everything Punz wasn’t and somehow it made perfect sense to everything he was.

“Oh, Purps,” his tone was sickening sweet. “What do *you* think we’re going to do with Theseus?”

“Recruit him?” Purpled said, because that sounded like the smart answer, it is probably what he’d do. “Kill him— I don’t fucking know.”

“No, no, no,” Punz shook his head before looking at Purpled with a smile, one that sent shivers down his spine. It was lopsided and forced and everything Purpled hated about someone else. “We find Theseus, we take away everything he loves. Then he has no other option but to come crawling back to us.”

Purpled shook his head. “That won’t work.”

*Unless you kill me.* Is what Purpled didn’t say, instead he stared at Punz.

Punz raised an eyebrow, “And why is that, o’mighty Purpled?”

Purpled managed a smile of his own, “Because— dear ol’ Punz, Theseus doesn’t care,” a lie. “Not really, he thinks he does. But he grew up on lies and hurt and he knows how to do that. You think a vigilante survives in Logstedchire with just... *pure wit*, no you dumbass, they have connections. They’re ruthless.”

Tommy was anything but ruthless, he was just a kid.

*They both were.*

“So try it,” Purpled kept his voice even. “Because if you somehow *do* manage to find something Theseus cares about— let alone loves. Then he will tear down the world for it, he will pull it apart brick by brick until he finds out who’s responsible and then he will *destroy them*. ”

Punz didn’t seem impressed.

It was the truth.

Maybe that was the best thing about this entire situation, the only thing Purpled had said this entire time, that was not some sort of lie or twist about Tommy, was that. That Tommy would

tear down time itself to find someone again, that Tommy would risk it all for one person and risk nothing for thousands.

Purpled found himself smiling, despite everything. He smiled and flashed Punz a smile. "Now... what do I get out of telling you that."

"You didn't tell me anything," Punz had the audacity to say.

Purpled just gave him a look.

"Fine. There's a storeroom, it's near that one burrito shop you went to while you were vigilante-ing. It has a purple flower painted on it. It's expected there will be a pick up in a few days."

Punz paused, looking at Purpled, still basically sitting on the ground before he stood up completely. "Bye, Purpled."

"Do you regret it?" Purpled said before he could stop himself.

Punz looked at him.

"Leaving."

And that made Punz actually stop, and turn to look at him. Purpled stayed in his spot. Punz glanced away then back at Purpled. "No."

"Would you do it again?" Purpled asked again, his voice shaking more than he wanted.

That made Punz stop again. He looked at Purpled, making eye contact, but Purpled was saved by his goggles from the onslaught of emotions that would hit him.

“No.”

Then Punz hopped off the building.

Leaving Purpled in the rain, to pick up the pieces.

The way it always went.

Purpled sat there for a few more moments in the cold, the rain slammed down on the concrete around him, but he couldn't get *more* drenched than he currently was.

Eventually he stood up, legs shaking and arm hurting.

He didn't think it was broken. Maybe a muscle was just twisted weirdly— he'd have to ask Tommy. Tommy who wasn't getting any sleep and Tommy who was stressed out of his fucking mind.

Could he really go to Tommy?

He could go to Quackity, he probably wouldn't ask too many questions. As long as Purpled was out of his vigilante gear. Quackity had an apartment in Logstedchire, and a much smaller one in central L'Manberg.

It was a Wednesday— he'd probably be in the Logstedchire one.

That wasn't... too far away from here.

Purpled dropped off the side of the building. He took off his hoodie and goggles, stuffing them under a dumpster— which probably wasn't smart but he did it anyway. He stuffed the mask into the pocket of the hoodie and figured the rest of his outfit was normal enough. Just a black shirt, pants and boots. He really had a colour theme he stuck to.

Black and purple.

Halloween colours— kinda, sorta?

He started on the short walk to Quackity's place, his arm ached and he couldn't move it beyond a certain point, maybe it was broken and Purpled was still running off adrenaline and other good things.

After almost falling over because of the layer of water covering everything, Purpled managed to drag himself up to Quackity's apartment.

It was a nicer place, but Quackity didn't have this apartment for its niceness, he had it so he could have parties and hold people here and generally have a good time. It was a bigger place, Purpled had never been inside but he got the general impression.

He knocked on the door.

Silence.

He knocked again.

Noise from the other side of the door.

The door opened.

It was... the reporter dude... who Quackity kept talking about.

They both stared at each other for a long second, “I think you have the wrong house—” he said, going to swing the door shut.

Purpled stuffed his foot between the door and the frame, keeping it opened at least a little. “I need Quackity.”

The reporter dude— who’s name was escaping Purpled at the moment scowled slightly. Raising an eyebrow.

“Daniel?” A voice said, clearly worn down with sleep. Footsteps shuffled over to the door, and the door swung open a little more. Sure enough, Quackity *was* there and he was looking at Purpled like he was debating several things. “What the— what the fuck?”

“I need my arm checked,” Purpled said, “I— had a run in with my brother, it might be broken.”

Quackity blinked at him. “Huh?”

“It’s—” Purpled tried to think of a way to explain, explain the mess that is this situation and how he can fix it without exploding. “He— he wasn’t a very nice person, he didn’t change.”

Something in Quackity’s gaze softened and he grabbed Purpled by the shoulder, his good one, and pulled him into the apartment. It was pretty big, with a nice couch and TV, the kitchen is a very nice looking one, with white marble countertops and black cabinets, Purpled assumes it was very trendy.

Between the kitchen and the lounge room was a large dining table, it looked like an older one — maybe the type that gets passed down through a family. It had personality, it had notches in the wood and marks from where hot pots and pans have been placed on the wood and scorched a mark into it.

It was a good table, looked like Quackity could host a *killer* game night here.

Instead, he was led to the couch, it was a bright yellow couch— bit of an eyesore but comfortable enough that Purpled found he didn't care. The rug was one of those really fluffy ones, the ones that felt like they could be made out of some sort of animal fur, Purpled didn't think it is, but it was very soft.

The coffee table was... well as most surfaces in someone's house reveals a good chunk about them. Quackity had some sort of torn apart tech on his table, around the magazines and remotes and various video game cases scattered around the odd controller.

It was messy, but in the neat sort of way. There was lots of clutter but the house was physically clean, the floor is vacuumed and the counters have been wiped down. Overall it was rather nice, as far as Logstedchire apartments went.

On one side of the apartment were two doors, and in the corner of the lounge room there was another one, Purpled guessed that was some sort of cupboard though, he had no way of proving that though.

Quackity hummed and that snapped Purpled out of the detail noticing he was doing, he looked at Quackity who was frowning, Purpled knows he isn't mad at him, but still, the point stands. He stares at him for a long moment, and Quackity just gives a small smile.

"Daniel, this is Karl."

"Nice to meet you," Purpled grit out, the adrenaline was starting to wear off and this hurt like a bitch—

Punz that motherfucker, if Purpled had slightly less morals then maybe he'd kill Punz, make it nice and painful too, maybe paralyse him first then hit all those nerve endings and pain spots with a knife—

Woah that was way too violent.

“He’s a bodyguard at the tower,” Quackity gave Karl a look, Purpled couldn’t see it but it seemed to shut down any questions, before prodding at Purpled’s shoulder. “Still don’t get why we need fucking bodyguards at the *tower* like doesn’t that defeat the purpose of what a hero does—”

“Quackity,” Karl said softly, “I’m not going to side with you here,” he looked at Purpled and gave him a grateful smile, “Well, thanks for keeping Quackity out of trouble.”

Oh, so they were like gay, gay for each other.

Cool.

Purpled nodded. “He doesn’t exactly try to make that easy for me,” he grins and the betrayal on Quackity’s face is everything he’s ever wanted and then some. “Like the time he gave a dog a rocket launcher—”

“That was not me!” Quackity yelled, “That was fucking— Sapnap. He gave Techno’s dog—that little demon in a fluffy body—”

“The cutest thing I’ve ever met,” Purpled finished with a smile and Quackity stared at him again like he wanted Purpled dead and also on the floor, which almost made that funny. Quackity prodded at his shoulder again and Purpled winced.

Karl took note of that and gave Quackity a nod.

Oh great, they were already co-parenting him, and they’d known each other for like three whole seconds. Honestly, what was it with people meeting young-ish people and adopting them emotionally in the tower.

It was almost funny, a certainty in the tower.

Another prod at his shoulder and a noise tore itself out of Purpled's throat.

"Sorry," Quackity stopped completely, "You okay?"

"Fine." Purpled balled his hands into fists and rested them on his legs, keeping his eyes straight ahead.

Karl and Quackity gave each other a worried glance.

With a soft huff, Karl sat down in one of the armchairs so he was looking at Purpled, he didn't make eye contact, and Purpled almost felt grateful for that, he wouldn't have to chase the eye contact away for all the conversation, he just— wouldn't have to deal with it.

Karl was alright, even if he maybe wanted Purpled gone when they first talked, but Purpled wouldn't exactly blame someone for that, it was a reasonable enough reaction to a random person at your house.

"So," Karl leant forward in his seat. "What's your brother like?"

"Uh—" Purpled paused, "He— sucks. I'm assuming you meant older brother?"

"You have a younger one?" Quackity asked, another painful prod and he mumbled apologies as Purpled's hands tightened into even tighter balls on his lap.

"I mean— kinda?" Purpled said, "Emotionally, I don't think we're like brothers— but he is my best friend and I wouldn't be here without him, and I would like to pick him up and keep him safe from the world."

Quackity laughed, looking at Karl only for a moment. “As an older brother,” Quackity laughed, “That is very older brother coded of you.”

“You have siblings?”

“Yup,” Quackity said, “Most of the heroes have siblings— biological or adopted, you just somehow got with the most siblingless group in the entire tower. It was almost impressive.”

“Does Dream have siblings?”

“Not that I know of.”

“Does George?”

“Nope.”

“Sapnap?”

“Also nope.”

“Motherfucker—” Purpled said, “You said most, and you are yet to name anyone—”

“Skeppy,” Quackity deadpanned, “Sam... Foolish— I think.”

“Three out of— *ow* !” Purpled flinched away from Quackity, spinning around to look at him.  
“You fucker—”

Quackity looked actually sorry, “Uh— good news or the bad news.”

“Don’t care.”

“Okay bad news, your shoulder is dislocated. Good news, I can pop it back into place.”

Karl looked doubtful, he stood up. “Please let me— you don’t know how to—”

“I did it for Sapnap,” Quackity said, “And Wilbur when we were younger, just let me— it will barely hurt.”

“Please let me do it,” Karl said, “One of us actually has medical training.”

“You have medical training?” Purpled asked.

“I was going to be a nurse,” Karl explained, “Completed my degree and everything, fell into journalism accidentally— didn’t even go to school for it. Quackity— you’re gonna damage it more.”

“Sapnap’s fine!”

“Okay... but Sapnap probably cares less if his arm is damaged. Daniel is young— maybe he wants to be a weight lifter, has his whole life ahead of him.”

“I’m twenty?” Purpled, again lied, Purpled wasn’t twenty, but Daniel Greyson was and that was about just as good. Sure, he was only seventeen and sure— he didn’t know jackshit but his records said he was twenty. “I’m not that young.”

“A mere child,” Karl muttered.

“I can put it back into place,” Purpled said, “Just had to figure out what was wrong with it.”

That comment made Quackity and Karl exchange a nervous glance.

“I’ll do it,” Karl said, “Quackity move, and talk to Daniel.”

Quackity moved, and Karl sat down in his spot. Facing Purpled’s shoulder, where he started prodding at it as well— fucking fantastic, that was not what was supposed to be happening. Quackity moved to the armchair where he squat down and looked at Purpled.

“So— what’s your brother like?”

“Huh?”

“You didn’t really answer the question, the brother that hurt you, what was he like— before all of this.”

Purpled didn’t let himself smile, but even knew the thing that rose in his chest was a form of fondness. A gentle sort of fondness he didn’t allow himself much, he tired to shake it away but it did not move.

“Uh— our—” how the fuck would Purpled explain this. “Mum,” he decided on, “Wasn’t very nice to us. I was very little, and he’s about eight years older than me... I think. So he’d look out for me, he was kind— back then. I guess he had to be, and he told me stories and— *ow*. ”

“Sorry.”

“We just had a good time, as good as it could be. She— yeah I guess it’s safe to say she abused us. Then— my brother hit her pretty bad.”

*Pushed her out of a fucking window.*

Is what he didn’t say.

“Fought back,” Purpled said quietly, “We— left. Then he— had an offer to join a gang.”

Quackity winced from in front of him.

“And... guess I wasn’t allowed to follow. So— he just kinda left me.”

“He left you?” Quackity screeched.

“Out in the rain,” Purpled muttered absent-mindedly. “He did that the first time too. Said he didn’t regret it, leaving me, but said he wouldn’t do it again. And what the fuck am I supposed to do with that? That’s not... fair.”

“It’s not,” Quackity said gently, “None of that was fair on you, Daniel.”

“And it’s so fuckin’ dumb,” Purpled willed himself not to cry, and he wasn’t sure if he would be able to actually do anything about that, or if he’d just start crying forever and ever and everyone around him would have to deal with it. “I hate him, I fucking *hate* him, I want him gone— but I miss him, I miss when it was easier and he was nice and fuck—”

He put his hands over his eyes and leant forwards, trying with everything he had not to cry.

Quackity moved, so he was at Purpled’s level, basically sitting on the coffee table. Purpled avoided eye contact, he didn’t want that whole emotion fuckery again, he just wanted to...

not, he didn't want to deal with this.

He missed Punz.

He hated Punz.

Why couldn't he have simple emotions about that?

He wanted Punz gone, not dead, gone— away, out of Purpled's life forever and then perhaps a little bit longer. He didn't want him dead, just... snap him from existence along with his impact on Purpled's life.

"That wasn't fair," Quackity said, "And I am— so sorry, that you had to go through that alone. All of it, it wasn't fair and it won't be fair— and for what it's worth. Your brother sounds like a jackass."

Purpled laughed, "Yeah," he muttered, "Yeah he is." Which was the truth.

Quackity just gave him a small smile, there was something caring behind it— and Purpled had seen that look within a bunch of people. But— it wasn't ever directed at him. Techno gave Tommy that soft look, Wilbur gave Tommy that soft look— Purpled didn't tend to be looked at with that sort of kindness.

It made him want to break down into tears at that spot.

Purpled nodded, trying to keep all his tears in his face, and willing himself not to cry because that would be a fucking national tragedy. Something he'd emotionally never recover from, he didn't want to have Quackity and his boyfriend see him cry.

Pain shot through his shoulder and Purpled gritted his teeth together as Karl seemed to wince even more than him.

Purpled took a deep breath before moving his shoulder around, it didn't hurt, the muscle ached a little but it was far better.

He stood up, "Thanks for having me, but I really need to go—"

"Daniel," Quackity said gently and Purpled paused in his tracks. "Would you like to stay the night? Just for a bit."

Purpled looked at Quackity, before nodding.

Quackity also stood up, "Do you want a hug?"

Purpled didn't say anything, he wasn't going to fucking ask for a hug, what was he, Tommy? No. He was going to hold all his emotions to his chest until he exploded, just... kabam and then everyone else would have to deal with that.

"Okay..." Quackity seemed to think for a moment, "If I wanted a hug, would you be okay with giving me one?"

"Yeah..."

"Can I have a hug?" Quackity asked.

And yes, it was so fucking dumb. But it was just... nice to have someone actually understand him, understand his emotions and how to talk to him. Someone who wasn't Tommy or Punz, it was— so fucking nice.

Because Purpled wasn't an asshole, he wrapped his arms around Quackity and hugged him with as much force as he could manage.

Purpled wanted to cry, he didn't.

But he felt safe.

And that— well that felt like enough.

---

Work was always interesting, because somewhere along the path of joining— and he was supposed to work on the front door. Checking that people had their badges, security had tightened after an Elysium attack before he worked here—

Now his job was... well he was Quackity's, Tommy. His job was to basically follow Quackity around, and Quackity would talk about his day. He would explain what being a hero was like and Purpled would tell him for the millionth time that he was never going to be a hero.

Then Quackity would smile at him, all sly and knowingly and say something along the lines of, *"You don't have to be a hero, you have to be a good person. Someone who people want to remember."*

Then Purpled would go quiet.

Normally Quackity would compliment him, telling him that he was someone that people wanted to remember, but Purpled didn't really have the proof of that.

However, despite how amazing his job was.

It was real fucking chaotic.

Take the current example.

Foolish had something that Fundy wanted, and Fundy wasn't as tall as Foolish so he was leaping to try and find it. And Foolish would move it out of the way, and then Fundy would try again with all of his hybrid strength.

It was amusing to watch.

But really fucking loud.

“You— you,” Fundy stopped to breathe. “Give it back.”

“No...” Foolish said, “I don't think I will.”

Purpled sighed, standing next to Tommy and leaning slightly to face him. The way they always did. When they stood next to each other, they both kinda— leant towards the other, so their shoulders would brush. Purpled didn't think about it a lot, until he did think about it.

Fundy screamed something before swinging at Foolish who laughed even harder and held... whatever it was above his head, as Fundy tried to jump up to reach it. He failed— pretty hard, but it was amusing.

Wilbur was also attempting to help, but failing. Both Tommy and Purpled tried to ignore that Wilbur's wrist was still in a wrist brace.

Tommy was smiling fondly, as Wilbur tried to help Fundy and failed. Techno was sitting on the ground, Floof on his lap just watching as Wilbur was being no help at all. He was sitting next to Quackity, who kept nervously glancing at Floof.

Sam was just tuning them out completely.

“Come on asshole,” Wilbur said, jumping up again and Foolish moved the... technology piece? Out of the way. “Try me, you think you’re the big shit just because you can electrocute people?”

“I know that I’m the big shit because I can electrocute people,” Foolish deadpanned.

Purpled glanced at Tommy. “I hate it here.”

“Yeah...” Tommy grinned, crossing his arms. “But it’s home.”

And that made Purpled pause, looking at Fundy and Wilbur and Foolish and Quackity and Techno and Sam and Tommy— everyone who was here.

Tommy had a point.

“Yeah...” Purpled muttered, “I suppose it is.”

And it was.

It was home.

Something about that was terrifying, nerve-wracking. Elysium was around the corner and Tommy was on the verge of a mental-breakdown and things could go very wrong very quickly and Purpled might lose it all.

But...

He was sick of being alone.

And now he had something worth protecting.

So he'd protect it.

He glanced at Tommy again, who was watching as Floof yapped, seemingly wanting to get into the scuffle which Quackity and Sam had both joined at well.

Tommy was grinning, arms crossed, like this was one of the moments— one of the moments that he was going to remember, Purpled knew that look— the one where Tommy wanted to remember this forever. If he could take a photo of this moment and live in it forever, Tommy would.

He would protect Tommy, his home— best friend, brother?

He didn't really know, but what he did know was that Tommy was something worth saving.

*This* , whatever this was, it was a home worth protecting.

And he would protect it with everything he had.

in honour, of the best boys. i offer you all, some art, of the best boys by some of the best people!

[tinaaos!goldenboys](#) by 3G

ROZY DREW [THEY](#) (who inspired the roof hop scene)

VIN DREW [TINAAOS!GOLDENBOYS](#)

GUESS WHAT, IT'S ALSO [THEY GOLDENBOYS](#) drawn by the lovely humanoid

The beloved NK drew [Tina!purpled at maccas](#), then [tommy asking for a milkshake](#)

[MORE OF THE BOYS](#) BY LE\_TINY\_TATO

Hi folks! Hope you enjoyed, I certainly enjoyed making tinaaos!purpled & quackity like brothers because WE CAN'T HAVE SHIT IN THE DREAMSMP SO I TOOK MATTERS INTO MY OWN FUCKING HANDS! This was super fun to write, and I got to write some fight scenes again, which I'm quickly learning to like again. Which is al

If you're reading this the day it comes out then hi! You are part of the TINAAOS upload spree where I upload:

- a.) a more acts chapter (already done)
- b.) a deo oneshot (should be uploaded rn)
- c.) the FINAL CHAPTER OF THE PURPLED SPINOFF (FUCKING DONE)
- d.) Chapter 35 of TINAAOS

all in one weekend! (for me anyway) so go check those out if you're reading!

Hope you enjoyed my character study of tinaaos!purpled (the best boy), stay safe, stay classy and commit some crimes. <333

Please [drop by the Archive and comment](#) to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!